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INTRODUCTION.

THE attention of the translator was first called to the writings of Vinet by Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, the well known author of the 'History of the Reformation.' Having, in the course of conversation, asked him concerning the published discourses of the most distinguished preachers in France and Switzerland, he particularly recommended those of Vinet, speaking of him as the *Chalmers of Switzerland.* He referred also to the work which he had recently published on the 'Profession of Religious Convictions, and the Union of Church and State,' as having produced a very great sensation in that part of the world. He admitted that Vinet differed from Chalmers in some respects, but intimated that he possessed a more profoundly philosophical spirit. Every one familiar with the writings of both men will readily allow that they resemble each other in breadth and energy of mind, originality of conception, and splendour of diction. Chalmers, we think, has more of energy and passion, but less of philosophical acumen and delicacy of perception; more of oratorical force and affluence of imagery, but less of real beauty, perspicacity, and power of argument. His discourses resemble mountain torrents, dashing in strength and beauty, amid rocks and woods, carrying every thing before them, and gathering force as they leap and foam from point to point, in their progress to the sea. Vinet's, on the other hand, are like deep and beautiful rivers, passing with calm but irresistible majesty through rich and varied scenery; now gliding around the base of some lofty mountain, then sweeping through meadows and corn-fields, anon reflecting in their placid bosom some old castle or vine-covered hill, taking villages and cities in their course, and bearing the commerce and population of the neighbouring countries on their deepening and expanding tide. The diction of Chalmers is strikingly energetic, but somewhat rugged and involved, occasionally, too, rather unfinished and clumsy. Vinet's is pure and classical, pellucid as one of his own mountain lakes, and yet remarkably energetic and free.

Another thing in which they differ has reference to the mode in which they develope a subject. Chalmers grasps one or two great conceptions, and expands them into a thousand beautiful and striking forms. His great power lies in making luminous and impressive the single point upon which he would fix his reader's attention, running it, like a thread of gold, through the web of his varied and exhaustless imagery. Vinet penetrates into the heart of his subject, analyzes it with care, lays it open to inspection, advances from one point to another, adds thought to thought, illustration to illustration, till it becomes clear and familiar to the mind of the reader. His intellect is distinguished as much by its logical acumen as by its powers of illustration and ornament. He seldom repeats his thoughts in the same discourse, and rarely fails in clearness of conception and arrangement. Chalmers delights and persuades by the grandeur of his ideas, and the fervour of his language, but he adds little to the stock of our information. He abounds in repetitions, and is not unfrequently confused in his arrangement, and somewhat negligent in his statements. Though eloquent and powerful, his discourses are not remarkably instructive. But this is not the case with those of Vinet. While they charm by their beauty, and convince by their persuasive power, they abound in original views, and lead the mind into fresh channels of reflection and feeling. While one is satisfied with reading the productions of the great Scottish divine once or twice, he recurs again and again to those of his Swiss compeer. They abound in "the seeds of things," and possess a remarkable power to quicken and expand the mind. On this account they ought to be read, or rather studied, slowly and deliberately. Like the works of John Howe, which Robert Hall was accustomed to read so frequently, they will repay many perusals.

Both of these distinguished men are truly evangelical in their theological views; they develope with equal power the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and in their several spheres have done much to promote evangelical religion among the higher and more intelligent circles of society. Both have laid their great literary and scientific attainments under contribution to illustrate and adorn the religion of the cross, and have devoted much time and attention to those great moral and politico-ecclesiastical questions which at present are agitating the whole Christian world. On most of these questions, the views of Vinet are more thorough and consistent, and

aim at a complete separation of the Church from the State; a result, however, to which Chalmers has come in practice, and which he will, unquestionably yet reach even in theory. They are alike in this,—that both of them are possessed of great simplicity and earnestness of character. Both are men of genius, and men of God. As a writer, Vinet leads the movement in Switzerland and France against formalism and scepticism in the church, and particularly against the union of Church and State. Chalmers is doing the same, at least by means of action, in Scotland and England. Both of them have been professors in the colleges of their native lands; both have seceded from the national church, and yet occupy important places as theological teachers. They have written largely and successfully on the subject of moral science, in connection with Christianity, and have been called, by their published discourses especially, to address men of high station and cultivated minds.

It is but justice to say that Chalmers, as a preacher, is probably more popular than Vinet, and that his writings thus far have secured a wider circulation. This, however, will not, in our judgment, be the case permanently. Vinet must become popular, if not with the mass, yet with the thoughtful and cultivated, wherever he is known. His reputation in Switzerland and France is very high; he is also well known and highly esteemed in Germany, where his discourses and other writings have been translated and read with much interest. His great work, '*Sur la Manifestation des Convictions Religieuses, et sur la Separation de l'Eglise de l'Etat*,' "written," says one of our leading Reviews, "with great ability and eloquence," has been translated into German and English; in the one case by Dr. Volkmann, in the other by Charles Theodore Jones, and has attracted much attention, particularly in Germany, where the way was prepared for its reception by the two works of Dr. Rettig,[1] and pastor Wolff,[2] on the same subject. It has exerted a great and obvious influence on the mind of count Gasparin, member of the Chamber of Deputies in France, whose writings on the subject of religious liberty are destined, we think, to produce the most salutary results. Indeed, this work of Vinet is universally admired on the continent of Europe, except perhaps by some of the friends of the alliance of Church and State. The great number of reviews and replies it has called out is a striking proof of its

[1] Die Freie Protestantischen Kirche Giessen, 1832.

[2] Zukunft der Protestantischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1838.

value. We are apprehensive, however, that the English version gives but an inadequate conception of its force and eloquence. It seems to us wanting in freedom and elasticity. Faithful and laborious it undoubtedly is, but it does not reach the strength and beauty of the original.

As a writer, Vinet has many qualities akin to those of John Foster, one of the most powerful thinkers and vigorous writers England has ever produced. He has the same earnest and contemplative spirit; the same freshness and originality of thought; the same beauty and strength of diction, with more of ease and gracefulness of expression. The thoughts of Foster, to borrow a figure of Robert Hall, are presented to us in the shape of large and brilliant masses of bullion. Vinet's are wrought into beautiful and elegant forms.

Merle D'Aubigné, Gaussen, and Vinet in Switzerland, the two Monods, Grandpierre, Audubez and Gasparin in France, are the leaders of a noble host of ministers and laymen, who are devoting themselves, with great strength and ardour, to the regeneration of the church of Christ in continental Europe. Some of them are dealing heavy blows against the Papal church, as well as against all formal and secular systems of religion. They breathe the spirit of Christian love and freedom, and are evidently destined to accomplish great and lasting good for the cause of Christ. Indeed they seem to be the pioneers of a new reformation in the Helvetic and French churches; on which account their writings ought to possess a peculiar interest to the people of this country, to those of them at least who have consecrated themselves to the cause of God and of human liberty. God bless and aid them in their noble and self-denying labours!

Of the distinguished men who are engaged in this second reformation, Dr. Merle D'Aubigné and Dr. Alexander Vinet are manifestly the master spirits, the one as a historian of great research and unrivalled dramatic and descriptive power, the other as a deep philosophical thinker, an able controversialist, and an eloquent preacher. They are intimate friends, living some fifty miles from each other, on the banks of the same beautiful lake, the one at La Graveline, just beyond the walls of Geneva, and the other at Lausanne, situated on high ground, ascending about half a mile from the lake, and overlooking the whole extent of that splendid sheet of water. Between these two places easy and constant intercourse is

enjoyed by means of small and rapid steamers, which are constantly plying on the lake. Dr. Merle differs from Vinet on one or two theological points, as he himself has informed me, in a brief communication recently received, but the difference is slight, and in my humble judgment in favour of the latter. He objects to the view given by Vinet on the subject of faith, in his two essays on the *Work of God*, which appear to me to be not only interesting and striking, but remarkably just and scriptural. For, if the affections have any thing to do, in the act of faith, if faith is more than an assent of the mind, or a mere intellectual reception of the truth, then is it a *work* demanding the whole energy of our spiritual and moral natures. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" he cannot therefore be justified without a right state of the affections. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," says our Saviour; and this striving has reference as much to the exercise of faith as to the performance of external duties. The reception of moral truths cannot even take place in a passive state of the mind. It is never more active or energetic than when seizing or embracing the mighty facts and doctrines of the Gospel, which are fitted alike to quicken the intellect and transform the heart. This work of faith, it is true, differs essentially from those works of the law by which no man can be justified. It implies no merit, and cannot therefore be the procuring cause or the basis of our acceptance before God. Still it is a moral pre-requisite, without which it is impossible to please God. It receives the truth "in the love of it," cleaves to it as its portion, and works it up into the whole texture of its spiritual and immortal nature. On this subject some of the Swiss and French evangelical preachers cherish, we fear, imperfect and erroneous notions. Even Luther, and some of the early reformers, had somewhat narrow and exaggerated views of faith, and did not sufficiently dwell on its relation to moral character. Edwards, in his book on the Affections, has set the matter in its true light; and we are pleased to see so profound a thinker as Vinet urging essentially the same principles as those of the great American metaphysician and divine.

The following are the principal events in the life of our author, so far as we have been able to ascertain them.

Alexander Vinet was born 17th June, 1797, in Lausanne, capital of the canton Vaud, Switzerland, certainly one of the most beautiful cities in the world, lying as it does upon the high and

sloping bank of lake Leman, or the lake of Geneva, as already stated; adorned with squares and gardens, fine edifices, and delightful promenades; in sight also of the high Alps, with their snow-clad peaks, and in the neighbourhood of Vevay, Chillon, Villeneuve, and other places of classic and romantic interest; at one time the residence of Beza, and the chosen dwelling-place of Gibbon, the historian of Rome. An academy of considerable celebrity has existed here since 1536, which in 1806 was elevated into an Academic Institute (what in this country would perhaps be called a university), with fourteen professors and a rector. It was also re-organized in 1838, and separated, if I mistake not, from all immediate connection with the national church. From its origin, Lausanne has been distinguished for its high literary culture, its refined and agreeable society. It is the residence of many foreigners.

Destined to the ministry by his father, who regarded the clerical profession as the most desirable and honourable of all, Vinet was placed at the academy of his native city, and pursued the ordinary course of studies, occupied, however, more with literature than theology. Fortunately, his mind was attracted, at an early period, to the study of moral science, for which he possessed a decided genius, and which exerted a very favourable influence, not only upon his theological enquiries but upon his religious character.

At the age of twenty, two years before the legal termination of his studies, he accepted a place as professor of the French language and literature, in the Establishment of Public Instruction or University, at Basle, capital of the canton of that name, a fine old city on the banks of the Rhine, distinguished for its cathedral and university, once the residence of Œcolampadius, the friend of Zuinglius, and one of the most eloquent preachers of the Reformation, and also the burial-place of the celebrated Erasmus. Such an appointment is an incontestable evidence of the superiority of Vinet's talents, and the high reputation for scholarship he had acquired even at that early period of his life. He made a sojourn in Lausanne, in 1819, in order to submit to the requisite examinations, and receive ordination as a minister of the Gospel. He returned to Basle, and continued there till 1837, as professor of the French language and literature. It was during his residence in this place that he published the most of his earlier writings, and established his reputation as a preacher. In 1830, he published two discourses, the one on the *Intolerance of the Gospel*, the other on this

Tolerance of the Gospel, which attracted great attention. They were prefaced in the following style, furnishing a beautiful specimen of the simplicity and modesty of his character. "Persons advanced in Christian knowledge will find, we fear, little nutriment in these discourses. Nor is it to them we have felt ourselves called to speak; it would better become us to hear them. We have forbidden our words to transcend the limits of our personal emotions; an artificial heat would not be salutary. Nevertheless we hope that to many persons we have spoken a word in season; and we cast it into the world, commending it to the Divine blessing, which can make some fruits of holiness and peace to spring from it, for the edification of the Christian church."

In this brief preface a peculiarity of all our author's productions, and especially of his discourses, reveals itself. They are "born, not made," originated, not manufactured. His soul has never been cast into any artificial mould. It has great clearness, elasticity, and strength. He is therefore entirely free from hackneyed phrases and stereotyped modes of thought. His discourses are drawn fresh from his own profound spirit. While perusing them you feel as if you were listening, not to the mere preacher, but to the deep thinker and the man of God. He never transcends the limits of his own personal experience; but that being the experience at once of a great and a good man, it possesses a peculiar warmth and beauty. "One must breathe the spirit," says Pindar, "before he can speak."—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," is the testimony of Jesus Christ. Our author, we think, understands this, and hence approaches as near as possible to the model which John Foster has in his mind, when he insists so strongly on the necessity, in evangelical writings, of naturalness and entire freedom from cant. Indeed Vinet distinctly acknowledges the great importance of this quality, and urges the same views as those of Foster's Essay *on the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion*. In the introduction to the volume from which we have derived the greater part of the discourses which follow, he says;—"Feeble, I address myself to the feeble. I give them the milk which has nourished myself. When some of us become stronger than the rest, we will together demand the bread of the strong. But I have thought that those who are at the commencement of their course need some one who, placing himself in their point of view should speak to them less as a preacher than

as a man who precedes them by scarcely a single step, and who is anxious to turn to their account the little advance he has made upon them.

"It is perhaps desirable that every one, according to the measure of knowledge which has been given him, should labour for the evangelization of the world. In the number of those whom I may be permitted to call candidates of the truth, there are perhaps some souls that are particularly attracted by the kind of preaching I have employed, and employed without choice; for I could not choose it. I say *perhaps*, and nothing more; but what I affirm with more confidence is, that it is important that each one should show himself such as he is, and not affect gifts he has not received.

"I believe I am not mistaken in saying that among those who speak or write on divine things there is an exaggerated craving for uniformity. I know indeed that community of convictions and hopes, the habit of deriving instruction from the same sources, the intimate nature of the relations that subsist in Christian society, must have produced, as their result, a unity of thoughts, of intellectual habits, and even, to a certain extent, of expression; but while we ought to admire this unity when it is produced, we ought to make no effort to produce it. The generous freedom of Christianity is repugnant to that timid deference for a conventional language and a vain orthodoxy of tone and style; nor does sincerity permit us to adopt, as an expression of our individuality, a common type, the imprint of which is always, in some degree, foreign to us; the interests of our religious development demands that we should not conceal from ourselves our real condition; and nothing would be more fitted to conceal it from ourselves than the involuntary habit of disguising it to others. In fine, the beauty of the evangelical work, and even unity itself, demand that each nature should manifest itself with its own characteristics. Confidence is felt in unity, when it produces itself under an aspect of variety; community of principle is rendered more striking by diversity of forms; while uniformity, being necessarily artificial, is always more or less suspected, and involuntarily suggests the idea of constraint or dissimulation."

It was probably in Basle that Vinet formed those decidedly spiritual views of religion so clearly developed in all his discourses and other writings. In this place, an evangelical influence, in greater or less degree, has existed ever since the time of the Reformation.

The labours of Œcolampadius, whom the good people of the city were accustomed to call their bishop, the occasional presence and preaching of the great Swiss Reformer, Zuinglius, the decided piety and activity of several of their most distinguished pastors and preachers in subsequent times, and more recently the prevalence of a noble missionary spirit, have conspired to impress an evangelical character upon the place. It has of course suffered, like all other cities in Switzerland and Germany, from the prevalence of rationalism, formalism, and infidelity; still the fire of divine love has continued to burn upon its altars, with a pure, and we hope, brightening flame. The following extract from a historical sketch of the Basle Missionary Society, written by one of its members, will give some idea of the kind of influence prevalent there.

"Scarcely has a missionary or other religious German society been favoured with a body of directors richer in Christian graces and spiritual gifts than those men who gave one another the right hand of fellowship for the establishment of a missionary institution at Basle in 1816.

"The twelve members of the Committee residing at Basle were clergymen and laymen belonging to different German and Swiss churches; namely, to the Reformed church of Basle, the Lutheran church of Wurtemburg, and the Union of the Moravian brethren. Yet never in these twenty-four years has the bond of peace been broken on account of dogmatical differences. Loving and serving one Lord, they have been one in his Spirit. The president of the committee for twenty-two years was one of the fathers of the Basle Reformed church, the secretary one of the most enterprising Christians of the south of Germany, the originator, or co-originator of many of the Christian institutions which have sprung up in the neighbourhood of Basle, since the beginning of this century; the treasurer, one of the members of the Senate of Basle, and head of one of the greatest mercantile houses of the city; the principal of the college, down to the end of the year 1838, the Rev. C. G. Blumhardt. The memory of these chief men among the Lord's people in our country, and their worthy associates, will ever be dear to the hearts of all the brethren of our mission. Dear father Von Brunn, the senior of the Basle clergy, retired in 1838 from the chair of the president. He is still alive, a venerable octogenarian, waiting in a child-like spirit for his entrance into his eternal home. He was a man mighty in the Scriptures, and mighty in prayer,

powerful in love, and skilful in comforting the troubled and heavy-laden. He was, as the head of another Swiss church called him, the high-priest of the mission. May his end be peace and his reward glory! The Rev. C. Blumhardt, who departed in December 1838, was a man especially prepared, as it would seem, by the Lord, for the difficult task of conducting the first German missionary institution of this century, through a generation careless of religion, opposed to vital godliness in every form, and scornful of every undertaking originating with the superstitious, bigoted, and narrow-minded pietists. When he died he left the mission and the college flourishing, gaining ground in public esteem and confidence, and prepared for more extended action, and for the contemplation of enterprises of which it would have appeared adventurous so much as to dream during an earlier period of the mission."[1]

In 1836, Vinet published, in Paris, his '*Discours sur quelques Sujets Religieux*,' and some time after his '*Nouveaux Discours*,' which have passed through several editions, and attracted universal admiration. It is from these two works we have selected the contents of our volume, under the head of *Vital Christianity, or Essays and Discourses on the Religions of Man and the Religion of God.* On the whole we have decided to give to some of these compositions the title of Essays, rather than of Discourses or Sermons, because they are not all sermons in our use of the term. Some of them were never preached, and not even written for the pulpit, though designed for a public assembly, before which they were read. Hence they are at once philosophical and practical, didactic and oratorical. To a great extent they combine all the advantages of the lecture and the oration, the dissertation and the sermon. The author has himself referred to this circumstance, expressing his apprehension that it may be regarded as a defect, and states, in his second volume, that if divested of certain forms of expression, the discourses of that volume might be called *studies* rather than sermons. They are addressed, as we shall presently see, to a particular class of persons, and have a style of their own, although well adapted to be useful to all who may read them. They develope what the author styles the *Religion of God*, and contain one of the ablest and most philosophical defences of evangelical Christianity. They abound in acute and cogent rea-

[1] Am. Baptist Magazine, vol. xxiv, p. 301.

soning, as well as splendid illustration. Their logic is as striking as their oratory.[1]

In 1837, his native canton tendered Vinet an invitation to succeed the professor of Theology, in the academy or college of Lausanne, who, in consequence of age, had resigned his place. This appointment was confirmed at the re-organization of the academy in 1838. Two years after he resigned his title as one of the national clergy, being unwilling to adhere, even by implication, to the principles of the new ecclesiastical law, which, as Vinet himself says, in a letter to the writer, places the Church in the hands of the State, and makes the ministers judges of each other's doctrines, after having abolished all *rule* or *system* of theological instruction. But the people, with whom Vinet is highly popular, insisted on his retaining his professorship; and thus having, in 1838, ceased to be connected with the ecclesiastical establishment, he felt that he could conscientiously discharge its duties. He occupies this station at the present time, revered and loved by all who can appreciate talent united with moral excellence.

Vinet has suffered some persecution for his enthusiastic adherence to the cause of religious liberty. He was the subject, at one time, of a civil prosecution, on account of certain expressions in one of his writings, supposed, by the authorities of the Vaudois government, to be seditious, or at least dangerous in their tendency. No judgment, however, was rendered against him. It was the occasion of his publishing an Essay on 'Conscience and Religious Liberty,' the most of which is occupied with a personal defence. We perceive by an extract from the *Semeur*, a religious periodical published in Paris, and circulated in France and Switzerland, that a decided movement has been made in the cantons of Vaud and Geneva in favour of the voluntary support of religious institutions, a result to which the writings of Vinet have greatly contributed. "French

[1] That we have not overrated Vinet may be seen from the following extract of a letter by the able correspondent of the New York Observer, M. G. de Felice, Professor in the Theological Seminary at Montauban in France. Speaking of his work on Church and State, he says: "It is a volume of 500 pages in 8vo which bears the impress of the author's mind. M. Vinet is fond of philosophical subjects, and discusses them in a masterly manner. What would embarrass others has no difficulty for him. He is naturally profound and lofty, and can pursue his thoughts to the remotest abstractions. He is a theoretical rather than a practical man; he dwells constantly in the regions of pure thought, in which he freely displays the full force and extent of his mind.

Switzerland," says the *London Patriot*, "has been occupied for some time with discussion. The ecclesiastical law of the canton Vaud; the recent revolution at Geneva; the efforts of the minority in Neufchatel to obtain their political rights; the affair in the convents in Argovia, and the civil conflicts in the Valais, have rendered it necessary to investigate, in the names of religion and philosophy, the question of religious independence. It appears the moment has arrived to take more public measures." A convention on the subject has been held in the city of Lausanne, the result of which we have not yet learned, but it cannot fail to exert a favourable influence on the cause of religious freedom.[1]

The publications of our author are pretty voluminous, comprising some ten or twelve volumes, with many fugitive pieces, published in the Semeur and other periodicals. Some of these are prize essays, *couronné*, crowned, as the expression is, by *the Society of Christian Morals*. Nearly all of them have been translated into German, and have passed through several editions. His productions on the subject of Christian morals are exceedingly valu-

[1] While the above was going through the press, a letter, published in the New York Observer, from M. G. de Felice, gives the following information relative to the meeting referred to :—

"The meeting was numerous; members came from several cities of French Switzerland. After long deliberations, the four following articles were adopted :

"'I. They declare that they desire to act only in a manner conformed to the word of God. Hence, in order to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, they recognize that it is their duty to obey the magistrate in all that is not contrary to the word of God. They will employ, therefore, to obtain the object they propose, only such means as are conformed to this word. And in order to render unto God the things that are God's they consider that they are under obligation to do all in their power for the advancement of the kingdom of God, namely, for the triumph of the doctrines of the faith, for purity of worship and morals; and it is for this end that they are met.

"'II. They believe that God forbids alike to Church and State all claim to interfere, as such, in one another's domains.

"'III. One of the characteristic doctrines of the Scriptures is, in their view, that religious acts are not agreeable to God, unless they are voluntary and spontaneous.

"'IV. They think that it is at once the duty and the precious privilege of Christian churches to govern themselves, according to the word of God, only, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and under the supreme authority of Jesus Christ, the sole Head of the Church.'

"It is also announced, that a Society is about to be formed in French Switzerland for the promotion and advancement of the voluntary system. Time will show what hold this work has on public sentiment."

able, and indeed all of them abound in original and beautiful thoughts, and breathe an enlarged spirit of Christian love and zeal.

The Essays and Discourses we have translated are addressed particularly to that large class of cultivated minds who have some prepossessions in favour of Christianity, but who, from the influence of latent scepticism, do not yield their hearts to its direct and all-controlling influence. This circumstance, as already suggested, stamps upon them a peculiar character. It has rendered them at once profound and practical. But it has also given rise to some inconvenience in the use of words, as the author himself acknowledges. For example, the words *reason*, *nature*, *life*, are occasionally used in their strict and philosophical sense, then again in their more loose and general import. At one time, reason is commended and exalted as the gift of God, and the criterion of truth; at another, it is contemned and rejected as as impostor and a cheat. In the one case, he evidently refers to reason legitimate and true, occupying its own sphere, and performing its proper work; in the other, to reason perverted and false, transcending the limits which God has assigned it, assuming extravagant pretensions, and trampling upon the plainest principles of science and revelation. Indeed, as the author suggests, the word in these instances is used in two different senses. "So far as the words *nature* and *reason* designate that foundation of moral and intellectual truth which we carry within us, those universal and immutable principles to which all systems appeal, which are admitted in the most opposite theories, and on the common ground of which opponents the most decided are compelled to re-unite, at least for a moment, *nature* and *reason* merit the homage I have rendered them; for if, in my discussions, I had not set out from this given point, whence could I set out? But so far as reason and nature, instead of receiving the light of God, instead of appealing to it, and using its rays to illuminate their pathway, pretend to create that light, or to speak more exactly, so far as it is pretended, in the name of nature and reason, which disavow such an undertaking, to communicate to man an illumination and a power which must come from on high, I erect myself against that abuse. And if, in conformity to a usage more oratorical than philosophical, I designate that abuse by the name of those powers which give occasion for it, if I call *nature* and *reason* those pretensions which are raised in the name of na-

ture and reason, I confide in the attention and good faith of my readers, without concealing what the severity of philosophical language might demand from me." With this explanation, every intelligent reader will make the distinctions clearly indicated by the spirit and scope of the author's reasoning.

"Philosophers and men of the world," says Vinet, in the introduction to the first volume of his discourses, "invite us, in some sense, to meet them; having lingered long in the precincts of philosophy, they approach towards the sanctuary. The secret of life, its final word, is demanded from all quarters; and should we who know that final word be avaricious of it; should we refuse to speak it, because we must speak it to philosophers in a language less familiar to us than to them? That word is of all languages; it is susceptible of all forms; it has a thousand different expressions; for it is found at the termination of all questions, at the close of all discussions, at the summit of all ideas. Long or short, direct or indirect, every road is true that conducts to the foot of the cross."

The author, however, modestly disclaims all pretension of "preaching Christ in the Areopagus, or entering the lists with the doctors,"—but adds, that he had involuntarily turned towards "that numerous class of cultivated men, who, educated in the bosom of Christendom, and imbued, if the expression may be allowed, with Christian prepossessions, feebly struggle either against their own heart, frightened by the solemn aspect of Christianity, or against that too general impression, that Christianity, so necessary, so beautiful, so consoling, cannot be justified in the eyes of reason."

As to the first difficulty, he proceeds to say, "The Christian writer will not consider it his duty to remove it by abstracting any thing from the serious character of the Gospel. On the contrary, he is gratified to find this prepossession established; it is one error less to eradicate. The fear which the Gospel has produced is a commencement of adhesion. It is this very seriousness which the minister of the Gospel ought to cultivate to maturity. As to the second difficulty, which turns," says he, "on the old opposition between faith and reason," he makes the following admirable remarks.

"He who speaks of revealed religion, speaks of a system which reason cannot discover; because it is necessary that God himself should communicate it to us, by supernatural means. The Christian, then, rejects reason, so far as it professes to produce or create the truth, he does, in his sphere, what the true philosopher does in

his; for the latter admits, by virtue of an internal revelation, facts for the discovery of which reason is of no use. The philosopher has not to demonstrate, *a priori*, the facts of internal revelation, a revelation without antecedents, and anterior to all other acquisitions. The theologian, on his part, recognizes, in revealed facts, an acquisition superior to all acquisitions; he no longer proves these facts, for to prove them would be to create them. By acting thus, he does not deny reason; on the contrary, he makes use of it. And this is the place to observe, that reason, that is to say, the nature of things, in whatever point of view we place ourselves, will always be to us the criterion of truth and the basis of faith. The truth without us must always be measured and compared with the truth within us: with that intellectual conscience which, as well as the moral conscience, is invested with sovereignty, gives judgments, knows remorse; with those irresistible axioms which we carry within us, which form a part of our nature, and are the support and groundwork of all our thoughts;—in a word, with *reason*. In this sense, every doctrine is held to be reasonable; which, however, is not to say that every doctrine is held to be accessible to reason; nothing hinders it from receiving that which surpasses it. Moreover, beyond this inviolable limit, the theologian finds space and employment for his reason; he even applies it, in two different ways, to the facts of the supernatural revelation he announces. First of all, he developes the proofs of the authenticity of such a revelation; then he applies himself to prove its necessity, as well as its harmony, with the immutable nature of the human heart,—in a word, the perfect *reasonableness* of a system which *reason* has not discovered. Nay, the farther this system is removed in its principles from the discoveries of human reason, the more does its coincidence with it become striking and admirable. Thus, in Christian preaching, reason abdicates on one point, but only on one; it is satisfied not to comprehend, not to be able to construct, *a priori*, the principal facts of Christianity, and transfers them to the heart which embraces them, elaborates and vivifies them; but it finds, in a neighbouring sphere, the rich indemnities we have just indicated. By itself alone it cannot form the Christian, but it prepares him; it conducts from the natural to the supernatural, those whom the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit has not transported, without intermediate steps, into the high sphere of the faith of the heart. Thus the essential opposition which is proclaimed between

reason and faith has no real existence; they are two powers reigning in two distinct spheres. Those, therefore, who would make Christianity faith alone, and those who claim that it should be reason alone, are equally mistaken; it is both;—it takes possession at once of thought and feeling; it withdraws from examination, and lends itself to it by turns; it has its darkness and its light. The theologian is bound to prove himself well informed; he ought to conciliate to the Gospel the respect of reason itself; but he ought by no means to place the Gospel on the same level with reason; nay, he ought carefully to guard against this.

"Between the two extremes we have exhibited, the rationalist preachers appear to seek a middle ground; but he would be very simple who did not perceive that one of these extremes attracts them powerfully and claims them wholly. How ungrateful, too, their task! To reduce every thing to the principles of nature is evidently their pretension; to cause reason to usurp the place of faith, to extirpate from religion, by little and little, every thing serious, is the obvious aim of their labours. But when they have succeeded they will find themselves, like ordinary philosophers, face to face with mystery. What have they gained? Absolutely nothing; except to have taken a longer and more expensive route. I suspect unbelieving logicians find the rationalists indifferent philosophers.

"Is it perhaps that in rationalizing the Gospel, they have found a system more perfect than those which philosophy can produce? As to certainty, their system possesses nothing more than any other; as to intrinsic value, they might find one as good and plausible without making use of the Gospel. That meagre Christianity, which they put in the place of the true, has nothing peculiar or individual, nothing which elevates it above the theories of mere reason. They imagine that by retrenching the facts, of a transcendental sphere, that is to say, supernatural facts, they are merely drawing the blade from its scabbard; let them say rather, they have cast away the blade, and that the hilt only remains in their hands. Stripped of the great fact of expiation, and all that cluster of ideas connected with it, what, I ask, is Christianity? For ordinary minds, an ordinary morality; for others, an abyss of inconsistencies.[1]

[1] A striking evidence of this is found in the following passage from Lessing, a distinguished German critic, but unfortunately a sceptic on the sub-

"I am persuaded that true philosophers will find that evangelical preachers have taken a position more solid and philosophical. And we attach value to this suffrage; for if philosophy as a science does not inspire us with much confidence, so far as it relates to the solution of the great problem of life, it is not so with philosophy as a method, or with the philosophical spirit. The art of abstracting, of generalizing, of classifying principles, will never be disdained by enlightened Christian preachers; besides, there is a Christian philosophy. Retained within certain limits, it has its use in preaching, and even in life.

"If it is a mean it ought to be employed. The times are ominous. Society is evidently in a state of crisis. Never was the impotence of human wisdom, to consolidate the repose of nations and the welfare of humanity, more completely proved. Philosophy, deserting in despair its ancient methods, is abandoning itself to mysticism. In its need of some other light than its own, it has recourse to revelations, it is giving itself things to believe; it will believe them so long as it thinks it has invented them. It is ours to point out to it what has never entered the heart of man,—ours to render it more and more sensible of that obscure want which begins to have some consciousness of itself, that longing to attach reason to faith, and science to something revealed."

That there is a Christian philosophy, a religion of God, as far

ject of Christianity, as quoted by Dr. Pye Smith, in his Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, Vol. iii, p. 236. Speaking of the liberal or rationalist divines of his country, he says, "Under the pretence of making us rational Christians, they have made us most irrational philosophers. . . I agree with you that our old religious system is false; but I cannot say, as you do, that it is a botch-work of half philosophy and smatterings of knowledge. I know nothing in the world that more drew out and exercised a fine intellect. A botch-work of smatterings and half philosophy is that system of religion which people now want to set up in the place of the old one; and with far more invasion upon reason and philosophy than the old one ever pretended to. If Christ is not the True God, the Mahometan religion is indisputably far better than the Christian, and Mohammed himself was incomparably a greater and more honourable man than Jesus Christ; for he was more truth-telling, more circumspect in what he said, and more zealous for the honour of the one and only God, than Christ was, who if he did not exactly give himself out for God, yet at least said a hundred two-meaning things to lead simple people to think so; while Mohammed could never be charged with a single instance of double-dealing in this way." How true it is, that to abstract the doctrines of the Godhead and atonement of Jesus Christ from the New Testament is to leave it an *abyss of inconsistencies!*

superior to all human philosophies and all human religions as the heavens are higher than the earth, no believer in divine revelation can doubt. It is not, however, a speculation, or a theory, but a system of absolute and authoritative truth, so simple and so practical that all, even the unlettered peasant and the degraded slave, can receive it and apply it as the power of God unto salvation. After rejecting with contempt the *wisdom* or *philosophy* of this world, the apostle Paul adds: "Howbeit, we speak wisdom (philosophy) among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world which come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." That is to say, this philosophy, or religion of God, is a revelation from above, or the development by God himself of what otherwise would be a mystery or secret, a philosophy therefore of original and positive truths, a definite, absolute, and authoritative philosophy. It is thence to be received, not as a deduction of reason, but as an inspiration from on high, a doctrine altogether peculiar, altogether divine, "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world, to our glory;—for it is written, Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." These things are the original facts spoken of by our author, as equivalent in authority to the great intuitive truths which all philosophers admit without proof, and antecedent to all speculation. Of such revealed facts, philosophy has never dreamed: Her eye has never seen them; her ear has never heard them; her soul has never conceived aught even resembling them. They are hidden from the world entirely. For what man, to quote the language of St. Paul, knoweth the things of man save the spirit of man that is in him? And who but the Spirit of God knows the things of God? Man may know himself; man can alone know what passes in his own interior nature. No being in the universe but God and himself can know the facts of his own mental experience. But while man may be conversant with his own mind, he cannot be conversant with the mind of God. Therefore the Spirit of God must give us a religion, in other words, reveal to us the mind of God. It is as impossible for man to give us a perfect religion, as it is for one born blind to give us the knowledge of colours. It is true that man is made in the image of God; and he may thence infer, in a general way, that God is an intelligent, designing, and

governing Being, and that he will be controlled by the principles of righteousness and benevolence; but a finite mind can never be the gauge of one that is infinite. No creature can take upon himself to reveal the designs, and mark out the conduct of his Creator, in all the possible cases in which it may be necessary for him to interpose in the affairs of mankind. Man may perfectly manifest himself, but he cannot perfectly manifest God. It would be an infinite presumption for him to announce the principles on which the Almighty will dispose of imperfect and sinful beings, and what provision he will make for them in the everlasting future. This is a matter pertaining to the mind or Spirit of God; it is a subject for an exclusive and authoritative revelation. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Holy Spirit." Hence the religion of God, or Christianity, is not a deduction, but a testimony, not a system of opinions, but a manifestation of truth. The natural man, that is the uninspired or unenlightened man, cannot know, cannot discover "the things" of such a revelation; for they are spiritually discerned. They shine only in their own light, can be seen only in their own light. Properly speaking, they cannot be proved, they do not need to be proved.[1] Like the sun, or the stars of heaven, they need only to be seen. They decline all attestation and support from man's philosophy. They infinitely transcend all his science and logic. In a word, they are divine, they proceed from the Infinite Mind, are matters of pure revelation, and are to be received, in adoring reverence, on the simple ground of his indisputable authority. Man can measure the stars, and subdue the lightning; he can descend into the bowels of the earth, and bring together the petrified relics of past generations, and thence write the history of the earth's revolutions; nay, he can analyze his own feelings, and construct a mental philosophy; but he cannot enter the mind of God, he cannot fathom the depths of his infinite counsels. "Who by searching can find out God, who can find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher than heaven, what can we do, deeper than hell, what can we know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." Who then will venture to sit in judgment on "the things that are freely given us of God;" or arraign the wisdom of a scheme for the redemption of man originating in the mind of Jehovah?

[1] We use the term *proved* here in its strict logical sense, as equivalent to *demonstrated*. No one needs to prove that the sun shines. He sees it, he feels it.

Those who convey this revelation to us demand investigation as divine messengers. They court it even, they glory in it. For this purpose they present divine credentials, miracles, prophecies, inspiration, that is, indisputable and well known facts, which he who runs may read; but they will not allow this message itself to be questioned by a human tribunal, to which, from the very nature of the case, it cannot submit. That message they convey to us as a testimony from Heaven, a philosophy from the Infinite, a religion from God. And who shall say that it is not refulgent with the light which irradiates the eternal throne?

That Jesus Christ, his apostles, and ministers, existed, that they wrought stupendous miracles, that they fully authenticated their mission, who that knows history, who that has read the New Testament can doubt? Reason decides this point, and decides it on the same principles on which it proves any fact in science and history. But the communication which these divine messengers bring to the world is another thing. While it is revealed through selected instrumentalities, it proceeds from God, and has no taint of human imperfection. In the great truths of Christianity, we have absolutely and truly the mind of God. This was the constant claim of Christ and his apostles; and if their credentials cannot be sustained, the whole falls to the ground as a deception or a dream. That man who disputes the miracles and the historical facts, calling them myths and legends, denies the Gospel, rejects Christianity. He makes the Son of God an impostor, and his apostles fanatics, fools, or knaves. He would leave us without a revelation, and prove himself a more honest and a more able man than Jesus or Paul. But the credentials of the Christian witnesses can be sustained, the miracles of Christ and his apostles can be proved. The Son of God must have risen from the dead; or all history lies, all testimony is false, all virtue is a cheat. A spiritual Christianity, and a perfect system of morals, at once written and embodied, is an impossibility without a historical Christianity. It is the life without the man. As well then might you destroy the body for the purpose of saving the life, as abstract the soul of Christianity from the outward form in which its divine Author enshrined it.

Having ascertained, by means of reason, the reality of the historical facts of Christianity, we are thus compelled to receive as *the religion of God*, the revelation which it conveys to us.

Well, then, it may be asked, shall "the mind of God" permit itself to be questioned by the mind of man? Shall the decisions of Infinite Wisdom appear before a human tribunal? Shall a divine philosophy, a method of pardon and eternal life from God himself be submitted to the meagre philosophy and the petty logic of the men of this world? Shall the Gospel of Christ, the religion of the ever-blessed God, bow down and do homage to the gross materialism of one set of philosophers, or the transcendental mysticism of another? Above all, shall it be forced to cast off all its glories, and lie in the dust a withered and degraded thing, to gratify the pride of some rhapsodizing spiritualist, who believes himself wiser than Christ and all his apostles? No! the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man. Christianity is either true or false, divine or human. If true, if divine, it is absolutely true, absolutely divine. It is a matter of infinite obligation, and must be received in all its length and breadth of authority and application. We do not want simply to think, to hope, to imagine: we want to know, to believe, to rejoice. In man, however, we can never confide. A philosophy, either all human, or half human and half divine, we cannot trust. We need a religion from God, an absolute religion, a perfect and indestructible faith, a religion for life, a religion for death, a religion for immortality; so that "our faith may stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." With this, we shall be safe, with this, happy and triumphant,

"Amid the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds!"

The world by wisdom never knew God, never can know God. All attempts to discover, that is, to work out and excogitate a perfect religion, must, from the nature of the case, prove utter failures. In fact, the thing involves an impossibility; for, as water can never rise above its own level,—since the part is never equal to the whole,—since imperfection and sin can never comprehend the infinite and the holy,—so man can never give us the knowledge of the true God and eternal life. Never can he solve the mighty problem, "How shall man be just with God?" How shall the unclean unite itself with the pure, the finite with the infinite, the fallen with God? The Father of spirits must himself interpose, and give us such clear and explicit information that no sincere and humble man may err upon points of such vast and thrilling interest.

If, then, philosophy cannot discover a perfect religion, it cannot certainly modify and improve the one already given us by God. Like the sun, this may have its obscurities, nay, it may be dark from excess of brightness. But this is no more than might have been expected. Indeed, this very circumstance is one of the most striking evidences of its divinity. A religion from God must have its aspect of mystery and difficulty. It belongs to the infinite, it runs into eternity. Its truths are the stars of a boundless expanse, and are set in a firmament of gloom. All nature is mysterious; but who would think of improving it? Can any one give sweeter hues to the rose of Sharon, or the lily of the valley? Can he whiten the driven snow, or impart a deeper blue to the arch of heaven? Can he give a nobler curve to the neck of the war-horse, or add a more beautiful green to the grass of the fields? Can he dispose the stars above him in more perfect order, or add a deeper lustre to their silvery light? What, then, can speculative philosophy do for the Christian religion? What can reason add to the power of God and the wisdom of God? Above all, shall philosophy dare to remove a single tint, a single leaf or flower, not to speak of a branch or limb, from the great Christian tree? Shall we permit it to tarnish the glory of God manifest in the flesh, the worth of Christ's atoning sacrifice, or the beauty and perfection of the new-born soul? No! it has nothing to do with religion, but to adore it, to fall prostrate at the feet of the Son of God, and "crown him Lord of all."

And yet, speculative philosophy has ever been tampering with Christianity, ever debasing its purity, ever weakening its power. By commingling her own imaginations with the plain declarations of God, she has produced what lord Bacon calls "*malasana admixtio*," infinitely worse than positive error itself; for the corruption of a good thing, as Horace suggests, ever becomes the worst of all. Nay, more, philosophy has even asserted a sort of supremacy over Christianity, now modifying this, now changing that, now adding one feature, and then abstracting another, till religion, in her hands, has been transformed from an angel of light into a hideous phantom, or an unsubstantial ghost. What! human philosophy superior to religion! Human reason above divine! Why, that is to cast down Jehovah from his supremacy, and exalt man to the throne.

But what is philosophy? The speculations of one man, and

nothing more. In its last analysis it is reduced to this. For it has no existence separate from the mind of an individual, and no authority but what it derives from this source. It is the system of Spinoza or of Descartes, of Leibnitz or of Wolf, of Kant or of Hegel, of Locke or of Helvetius. It is the notions, perhaps, of Jouffroy, of Cousin, of Carlyle, or of some inferior spirits. A number of such persons may unite in defending their favourite theories or peculiarities. They may form a school, and give currency to a system; but their combination, in this case, gives their opinions no additional authority. They are still the speculations or notions of distinct and independent individuals. To be received they must pass into other individual minds, into mine or thine, as it may happen, and thus possess no weight except as the probable reasonings or plausible speculations of a single fallible intellect. They may be true but they are just as likely to be false, nay, they are more likely to be false than true. Hence they are ever fluctuating and passing away. One theory supersedes another, and all become feeble and effete with age. Time will devour the whole of them. And the reason of this is found in the simple fact that they consist of speculations on subjects and relations which lie beyond the bounds of the finite mind, and in nine cases out of ten are but the splendid imaginations of gifted but erring men. In such a case, then, to assume a superiority over the religion of God, is to deify the individual reason, to dethrone God and worship self.

Reason, as Vinet clearly shows, has her province, and a noble one it is. It is hers to examine the credentials of the divine messengers, to question their character and purposes, to hear the voice of God, and in some cases to explain and enforce its meaning; for she is conversant with man, in whose language God speaks to us, and with whose modes of thought, feeling, and expression, reason is entirely familiar. It is hers to admire and develope the beauty and harmony of the religion of God; when received and authenticated, to trace the connections of its various parts, the analogy of its principles to the teachings of nature, and the consistency of its facts with the profoundest experience of the human heart. Reason has been called "*lucerna Dei*," "the candle of the Lord within us;" but certainly it is not fitted to illuminate the sun. It has also been denominated, "the eye of the soul;" and if it is so, most assuredly its proper function is simply to receive the light, not to mingle it with its own visions and obscurities. In that light it

may see things new and strange, perhaps startling; nevertheless it must receive them without a murmur. It is not placed in the soul to create the light, or to change it in any way, but to receive it as it shines from the heaven of heavens.

But men talk of reason as if it were a God, as if they themselves were God; and thence plunge headlong into the infinite ocean of speculation and uncertainty. In their adventurous course, their heated imagination may see many strange sights, and their pen may describe them in language of surpassing eloquence; but they will soon find themselves in the very abyss of doubt, perhaps of despair. Indeed we learn, from the whole experience of the past, that the abandonment of an authoritative revelation, and an eager, consistent pursuit of what is called "the truth," meaning by this, the absolute nature of things, ever conducts to infidelity or mysticism, to transcendental and impalpable spiritualism, or to absolute and atheistic doubt.

For the same reason, much of the religion which is popular and fashionable in certain quarters, or what is sometimes dignified with the title of rational Christianity, is not religion, but philosophy, not absolute faith, but human opinion. It consists perhaps of an admixture of philosophical speculation with Christianity, or it is Christianity eviscerated and withered, by the refining process of rationalistic criticism. Hence it is ever changing in its character, and gradually but irresistibly tends to infidelity, to whose ranks it is constantly transferring its votaries. It is ever learning, ever advancing and improving, as its abettors would say, but never comes to the knowledge of the truth. In one case, it is transcendentalism and the Gospel; in another, materialism and Christianity; in a third, a vague mixture of all sorts of notions; and in a fourth, a single feature or element of the Gospel, surrounded with the grossest scepticism, like a single tree or fountain in a boundless desert.

How clear, then, it is, that we need to be believers, not speculators; men of God, not mere philosophers. The soul of man longs for certainty and rest, absolute security and untroubled repose. Where shall we find it? In the dreams of speculative philosophy? In transcendental mysticism? In cold and heartless rationalism? In the endless diversities, the beautiful but ever-shifting visions of rational or liberal Christianity? No!—but in the cross of Christ; in the atonement and intercession of the great Mediator; in that

good hope through grace, inspired, not put, begotten, not made, by the indwelling Spirit of the Son of God.

The importance of these principles is receiving the most striking illustrations in the present day. Not understanding them, and not finding sure anchorage in the haven of absolute and authoritative revelation, some are driven abroad upon the open sea of conjecture and doubt; now impelled towards the rocks of infidelity; now imagining they have discovered the promised land; the Eldorado of philosophy and religion, in some new and visionary theory, or in some singular and unheard-of system of Biblical interpretation; then contending with the waves of scepticism; and finally engulfed in the roaring surge of atheism and despair. One rejects the divinity and inspiration of Christ, justification by faith, and the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit;—and, in order to maintain his theory, casts away some portions of the word of God, and subjects others to a most tortuous and ungenerous criticism. Another spiritualizes the whole, and establishes his philosophy or his creed on the ruins of common sense and all established principles of scriptural criticism. While a third, wiser forsooth than all the rest! rejects one-half of the word of God as puerile, and makes myths and legends of the rest; casts away the prophecies and the miracles; denies the incarnation and resurrection of Christ; insists that Jesus was only a man, a good and a noble-hearted man, but nothing more; maintains that other Christs may yet arise, greater even than he was; and that all of Christianity is transient, except one or two great principles; and pours contempt on the mediation and atonement of Christ, which the whole company of apostles, and the church of all ages, have regarded as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation!

Others there are, who, after infinite wanderings, and the most strange and startling changes, "ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth," like Cain, vagabonds in the realm of spiritual things, seeking rest and finding none, finally abandon the pursuit as hopeless, and neglecting the great salvation, rush into the open arms of Rome, renounce their individuality, and find repose in the absolute and infallible dogmas of a corrupt and superstitious church. Such persons may imagine they have entered a magnificent palace, but it will be found that they are enclosed within the walls of a horrid prison. They have mistaken the despotism of man for the religion of God.

We have been constrained to make these remarks introductory to the Essays of our author, because we deem them of great moment at the present time, and in the hope that we may dispose some to read with greater interest his lucid and striking delineations of the religion of God.

As to the translation, we may be permitted to say that we have endeavoured to steer a middle course between a rigidly literal and a very free version. It has been our aim, as much as possible, to preserve the peculiarities of the author; but we have not felt ourselves bound, in every case, to give the exact turn or order of expression, particularly in those cases in which a literal rendering would have been a bad or a clumsy one. Still, in several instances we have retained the French idiom, believing that its occasional use gives interest and vivacity to the translation. Vinet is by no means an easy author to translate. The original and philosophical cast of his thoughts, the delicacy of his conceptions, and the refined but beautiful turns of his expression, are not easy to transfer into clear and elegant English. Indeed, a perfect rendering of any book is scarcely attainable, but an approximation to it may be made by repeated efforts. After all, much of the beauty and power of a great and original work must be lost by the transference, like the delicate bloom of flowers, which is liable to vanish in the process of transplantation. But we have done what we could to present the thoughts and expression of our author to English readers; and "we cast it into the world," to use his own words, "commending it to the Divine blessing, which can cause some fruits of holiness and peace to spring from it for the benefit of the Christian church."

Should this volume be acceptable to the public, it may be followed by another of a similar kind, containing the author's remaining discourses.

R. T.

Boston.

VITAL CHRISTIANITY.

I.

THE RELIGIONS OF MAN AND THE RELIGION OF GOD.

"Things which have not entered into the heart of man."—1 Cor., ii, 9.

HUMANITY hath separated itself from God. The storms of passion have broken the mysterious cable which retained the vessel in port. Shaken to its base, and feeling itself driven upon unknown seas, it seeks to rebind itself to the shore; it endeavours to renew its broken strands; it makes a desperate effort to re-establish those connections without which it cannot have either peace or security. In the midst of its greatest wanderings, humanity never loses the idea of its origin and destiny; a dim recollection of its ancient harmony pursues and agitates it; and without renouncing its passions, without ceasing to love sin, it longs to reattach its being, full of darkness and misery, to something luminous and peaceful, and its fleeting life to something immovable and eternal. In a word, God has never ceased to be the want of the human race. Alas! their homage wanders from its proper object, their worship becomes depraved, their piety itself is impious; the religions which cover the earth are an insult to the unknown God, who is their object. But in the midst of these monstrous aberrations, a sublime instinct is revealed; and each of these false religions is a painful cry of the soul, torn from its centre and separated from its object. It is a despoiled existence, which, in seeking to clothe itself, seizes upon the first rags it finds; it is a disordered spirit, which, in the ardour of its thirst, plunges, all panting, into fetid and troubled waters; it is an exile, who, in seeking the road to his native land, buries himself in frightful deserts.

From the brutal savage, who kisses the dust from the feet of some hideous idol, to the magi of the east, adoring in the sun the immortal soul of nature, and the principle of all existence, to those unhappy nations who think to render him homage by the most shameful excesses, the religious principle every where makes itself known. Man cannot renounce either his sins or God; his corruption chains him to this world, a mysterious instinct impels him towards that which is invisible. Between these two opposing forces he makes no choice: he attempts to reconcile two incompatible elements; he confounds his morality with his devotion; he makes gods resembling himself, in order to offer them a worship analogous to his own evil thoughts; he erects even his vices into divinities; his religion becomes the faithful mirror of his natural corruption; in a word, he degrades the idea of the Divinity, but he cannot do without it; and he prefers infamous gods rather than adore nothing.

But what do all these different religions procure for him? Nothing but a torment added to all his other torments; a painful, humiliating subjection; frequently the necessity to do violence to the most cherished feelings of his nature; no solid hope; no internal repose; no moral perfection; such is the value of that mysterious instinct, a species of importunate craving which he can neither stifle nor satisfy. So that he who looks upon religion in the various terrestrial forms with which it has clothed itself, might say, with an appearance of reason, that it is one of the greatest evils nature has inflicted on humanity.

These fabulous creeds, it is true, disappear before Christianity; for the least effect of that august religion is to produce a disgust with all others. No new worship will establish itself on the earth; the field of invention in the matter of positive religions is irrevocably enclosed. But in the shadow of Christianity, and in the very bosom of the church itself, there flourish certain religions, without a history, without form and name, which, to many persons, take the place of Christianity. These religions, which owe more to it than their votaries imagine, are nothing more than an effort of the different faculties of the soul, of their own accord, to put themselves in communication with the Deity. It is the imagination, the sentiment, the reason, and the conscience, seeking together, or each by itself, to satisfy the longing they have for

God. And it is worthy of remark, that these different religions are particularly those of cultivated minds, who wish to find a neutral ground between Christianity, which appears to them too simple and unintellectual, and atheism, by which they are appalled. But let us enquire if these religions are better fitted than gross paganism to satisfy the various wants of the human soul.

What, in reference to religion, are the wants of man? He is ignorant of divine things; he needs a religion to enlighten him. He is unhappy from the evils of this life, and the uncertainty of his future destiny; he needs a religion to console him. In fine, he is a sinner; he needs a religion to regenerate him. Let us seek these various characteristics in the four religions of the *imagination*, the *intellect*, the *sentiment*, and the *conscience*.

To some, the Deity is revealed only in that which is fitted to strike the *imagination*. It is not the essence of the Being of beings, nor his moral character, nor his will, which chiefly occupies their attention, but that part of his being by means of which he is rendered, in some measure, sensible to our regards. It is the universe, that is to say, time, space, forms, in which are reflected his eternity, his greatness, and his power. If the spectacles of nature in themselves are grand and sublime, how much are they elevated by the idea of that Word which called from nothing all their magnificence; of that Intelligence which presides over all those mighty movements, which encloses as many wonders in the worm that dies under our feet as in the formation and government of suns! What charm and what beauty are added to the splendour of the starry heavens, to the savage harmony of the raging seas, to the smiling landscape of fields and woods under the beams of the morning sun, by the thought of the universal Spirit, which silently circulates through all beings, and which seems to reveal its immortal existence, and utter its voice divine, amid all the motions and all the sounds of the universe! So that, frequently, man, absorbed in the contemplation of these wonders, unites himself, by his enthusiasm, to the concert of the creation; his imagination feasts on the idea of God, and he believes himself to possess religion.

The imagination, the reason, the sensibility, the conscience, however, are four altars set up, between which the sacred flame is divided; but imagination is not the whole of man; it is not, by far, his best part. When the imagination has been excited in this

way, is man any more like God? Is he more worthy of God? And not to go even so far, has he more of peace or consolation? No! the charm is evanescent; from those heights to which imagination raises him, man falls back upon himself, and finds not God there; and the mighty spectacles in which he has mingled only make him feel the enormous disproportion between the universe so full of God, and his soul so void of God.

Others, in smaller number, seek to bring themselves into union with the Divinity by *intelligence*. To analyze the divine attributes, to harmonize them, to explain the connection of the Creator with the creation; in a word, to form, with reference to God and divine things, a body of systematic doctrine, is the task they impose upon themselves; and such labours, it must be confessed, are a noble exercise of thought. But a principal defect of this form of religion is, that it is less a religion than a study. Ordinarily the man who stops here seeks less to satisfy a want of his heart than a curiosity of his mind. Abstracted from himself, isolating himself from the things he contemplates, in order the better to contemplate them, application, practice, his personal relation to these high truths, occupy his attention but feebly; he acquires some additional ideas, but these ideas produce in him neither emotion nor change. And, indeed, how can he be changed by the things which always remain uncertain to his mind? The field of religious ideas, when it is trodden by the foot of natural reason, is only a field of problems and contradictions. The further one advances, the more his darkness increases; and he ends by losing even those primary notions and instinctive beliefs which he possessed before he entered it. This is the experience of all the systems of all the schools in every age of the world. The history of philosophy teaches us that these investigations, whenever eagerly and incautiously pursued, lead to the most terrible doubts, to the very borders of the abyss. It is there, face to face with the infinite, the philosopher sees realities dissolve, certainties the most universal vanish, his own personality become a problem! There he sees world and thought, observation and observer, man and God, swallowed up and lost, before his terrified vision in the boundless immensity of a horrible chaos! It is there that, seized with a mysterious dread, he asks back, with anxious emotion, the world of finite beings and intelligible ideas, which he wishes he had never abandoned. Thus his religion, all

thought, neither enlightens, converts, nor consoles him; and he finds himself as far removed from his aim as before his laborious investigations.[1]

Feeling this, many persons reject these idle speculations and acknowledge no religion but that of *sentiment*. This, they say, is good; and certainly all religion that proceeds not from the heart

[1] That speculative philosophy has been a fruitful source of scepticism and irreligion, no one at all acquainted with its history will deny. The class of philosophers of whom Benedict Spinoza and G. W. F. Hegel are fair representatives have generally rejected the Christian faith, and not only so, but the existence of a personal God, and the immortality of the soul. Nor is this a matter of surprise; for they transcend the boundaries of all fair and legitimate enquiry. Contemning the slow and laborious investigation of facts and evidence, as impirical and shallow, and speculating fearlessly upon

"Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,"

they lose themselves in the untried and desolate regions which lie beyond the limits of human enquiry. Now they seem to make every thing matter; then they seem to make every thing mind; anon they talk learnedly of "the whole," as if nature were God, and God nature, without any distinction, except that which exists between the absolute and relative, the real and phenomenal. Occasionally they appear to admit the existence of an independent and personal God, at other times to deny it altogether. They spurn the common, and especially the Christian notion of a supreme Jehovah, distinct from and superior to all the works of the creation, and adopting a profounder strain, represent the Deity as the eternal movement of the universal principle, the ever-streaming immanence of spirit in matter, which constantly manifests itself in individual existences, and which has no true objective (real) existence but in these individuals, which pass away again into the infinite." These are the words of Strauss, author of the '*Leben Jesu*,' whose rejection of a historical Christianity is the legitimate fruit of his speculative philosophy, just as a similar rejection of the Christian miracles, and particularly the miracle of Christ's resurrection, by Theodore Parker, is the fruit of a metaphysical system, which, as he remarks himself, "underlies" his theology. "Strauss," says professor Tholuck, in his '*Anzeiger*,' for May 1836, "is a man who knows no other God than him who, in the human race, is constantly becoming man. He knows no Christ but the Jewish rabbi, who made his confession of sin to John the Baptist; and no heaven but that which speculative philosophy reveals for our enjoyment on the little planet we now inhabit." To the same purpose is Strauss's own language:—"As man, considered as a mere finite spirit and restricted to himself, has no reality, so God, considered as an infinite Spirit, restricting himself to his infinity, has no reality. The infinite Spirit has reality only so far as he unites himself to finite spirits (or manifests himself in them), and the finite spirit has reality only so far as he sinks himself in the infinite."—*Leben Jesu*, p. 730.

Such is the last result of that boasted philosophy, which begins by explaining every thing, and ends with doubting every thing.—T

is sterile and vain. Let us, however, examine. We are speaking of a religion of sentiment. Without doubt this sentiment is love, and a love which has God for its object;—in which case it must be acknowledged that the best kind of religion is also the rarest, or that the love spoken of is a feeling exceedingly barren,—an affection, so to speak, without result. Many great things are done on the earth, things at least that men call great. The activity of the mind responds to the activity of outward life. Each day sees some new plans brought to light, some new enterprises begun. But amid all these actions, form an estimate of those which have for their principle the love of God, and you will admit, if the religion of love be the best, it is not the practice of a great number. In fact the love of God, if by this you mean a love, real, earnest, dominant, is not natural to the heart of man. And let us be honest; how can we love, with such love, a God from whom we are far removed by our sins and the worldliness of our affections; a God, who, in our better moments, cannot appear to us except in the aspect of a judge; a God, whose paternal providence is vailed from our minds, because we know no better, or do not know at all, the adorable secret of all his procedure toward us? How can we love him, so long as we cannot account for the disorders of the physical and the moral worlds, and while the universe appears to us a vast arena, in which chance puts in competition justice and injustice, and coldly decides between them? A doubt, a single doubt on the end of life and the intentions of God would serve to tarnish, nay more, to extinguish, in the anxious heart, the first germs of love. But this is, more or less, the condition we are in, without the light of revelation. To what then is love reduced, and by consequence, the religion of sentiment, in the greater number of the persons who appear to have approached the nearest to its attainments. What! does he, think you, love God, who opens his heart merely to the fugitive emotion which is excited by the view of his beneficence spread over the whole face of nature? Does he love him who, following the degree of sensibility with which he is endowed, yields to an involuntary tenderness, at the thought of that immense paternity which embraces all animated beings, from the seraph to the worm? One may experience this kind of love, and never be changed. If anything is evident, it is that the sensibility which frequently overflows in tears often leaves

in the heart a large place for selfishness; just as our fellow-men do not always derive any advantage from the tenderness we have felt at a distance from them. Love, true love of God, is a love of his truth, of his holiness, of his entire will; true love is that which is reflected in obedience; that which renews and purifies the conscience.

This brings us to the fourth religion, which man makes for himself, that of *conscience*. It is well, then, if in our turn we can say, this is good. For what is conscience but the impulse to do the will of God and to resemble him? And what do we want when we have arrived at this? Let us congratulate those who cleave to the religion of conscience, and regret that their number is so small. But what am I saying? Congratulate them! Let us think a little! Have we reflected on the course that opens before them? The religion of conscience! Is it not that which commands us to live for God, to do nothing but for God; to devote ourselves, body and soul, entirely to him? Is it not that which teaches us that to refuse any thing to him is to rob him; because, by sovereign right, every thing within and without us belongs to him? Is it not that which teaches that we cannot do too much for him, and that all our future efforts can never compensate for a single past neglect? Is it not that, then, which condemns our life, absolutely and irrevocably, and presents us before him, not as children, not even as supplicants, but as condemned criminals? Say, then, if the religion of conscience is good! Yes! for consciences free, indulgent to themselves, without delicacy, and without purity; but the greater your attachment to your duties, the more scrupulous you are to fulfil them, the more severe and complete the idea you have formed of the divine law, the more shall that religion be terrible to you; and, so far from offering you consolations, it will take away from you one by one all those you might derive from yourselves. Quit, for a moment, the scenes of the present, and the circle of Christianity; observe, at a glance, the religion of mankind, enter all their temples, look upon all their altars;—what do you see? Blood! Blood to honour the Deity! Ah! we are compelled to say that blood is there, for a thousand virtues neglected, a thousand obligations broken, a thousand enormities committed; that blood is the cry of a thousand consciences, which demand, from their entire nature, an impossible reparation, that blood is the solemn and terrible acknowledgments

of the truth I urge upon you. And would you form an idea of this need of expiation? Know, then, that the impossibility of solving the problem, the anguish of turning for ever in a circle, without issue, has driven man to a kind of despair, a despair which has become barbarous. For the sake of finding a worthy victim, man has recourse to man himself;—human blood has flowed in the temples, and the torment has not ceased; human blood has effaced nothing! To what victim, then, should man resort? To a God? But how should such a thing enter into the heart of man?

We have passed in review all the systems of religion which would seem possible without Christianity. We think we have presented them with fidelity; we have done them justice; we have taken nothing from them. We might have demanded from them an account of what they owe to Christianity, and caused them to do honour to that holy religion, by a greater part of what they possess of what is specious, good, and interesting, but we have abstained from that; we have confined ourselves, without further examination, to showing you the strength and the weakness of these systems. You are now, therefore, in a condition to pronounce judgment upon them. So far as it relates to us, here is our conclusion. In vain has man, in his search for the supreme good, called into exercise his reason, his imagination, his heart, and his conscience; in vain has he laid all his powers under contribution; in vain has he done all that is possible for man to do; every where in his systems there appear chasms wide and deep. The triple object of all religion, to enlighten, console, and regenerate, is fulfilled neither by the one nor the other of these religions, nor by all of them together. Is the religion of the imagination the subject of enquiry? That is the charm of a few fugitive moments; it is neither the light, the support, nor the sanctification of the soul. Do we try the religion of thought? Its only reasonable pretension is to enlighten; but it fulfils it so badly that it does nothing more than deepen the gloom which rests on religion. Do we address ourselves to the religion of sentiment? It moves the surface of the soul; it does not reach its depths, it does not regenerate it. In fine, the best of all these religions, that of conscience, by its very excellence, demonstrates the impotence of man to form a religion for himself. It can only show us the chasm which sin has made between us and God; but it cannot fill it up. It teaches us, that

in order to be united to God, two things are necessary, which it does not give us, and which none of our faculties can give us,—PARDON and REGENERATION. The man who pretends to accomplish, by his own power, the work of his salvation, must first pardon and then regenerate himself. It is necessary he should efface the very last vestige of all his former sins, that is to say, that he should do what cannot be done. It is moreover necessary, that, declaring war with his nature, he should force it to love God, to love the good, to hate the evil; that he should renew his inclinations from their foundation; in a word, that he should destroy the old man, and create in himself the new. To ask you if you can do such things is to ask, if a criminal, alone in the bottom of his dungeon, can provide his own letters of pardon, or a combatant, chained hand and foot, can promise himself the victory. It is to ask you, if you can do that to-morrow which you cannot do to-day; it is to ask you, if it will ever be possible, with the powers of your nature alone, to remake that nature.

Nevertheless there is not without this a religion complete and satisfying,—say rather there is no religion at all. And without this, you have reason to believe yourselves abandoned by God. Ah! why should you not turn your attention to that Gospel which seems to have divined all the secrets of your nature, and which meets all the wants of your soul! Why should not the view of the cross, where your pardon is written, the promise of the Holy Spirit, source of REGENERATION, cause you to leap for joy! Why should you not with ardour desire that the doctrine which remedies all, harmonizes all, satisfies all, should be as true as it is beautiful! Why can you give yourself a moment's repose before you enlighten your minds respecting it by all the means in your power? If such a religion has not been given to man, he must die; yes, die of grief for having been formed with insatiable desires after perfection, with an ardent thirst for God, and to feel that these desires, and this thirst, are only a cruel deception, a fatal mockery of the unknown power that created us!

But shall I hear from Christians, not the joyous accents of souls convinced, but the anxious appeals of hearts that are doubting still? No! let us together hail with our benedictions, that religion, alone complete, which responds to all the wants of man, in offering to each of his faculties an inexhaustible aliment; a religion of the

imagination, to which it offers magnificent prospects; a religion of the heart, which it softens by the exhibition of a love above all love; a religion of thought, which it attaches to the contemplation of a system the most vast and harmonious; a religion of the conscience, which it renders at once more delicate and tranquil; but, above all, a religion of the grace and love of God; for it is necessarily all these combined. Why should not the truth entire satisfy man entire? Let us hail with admiration that religion which reconciles all these contrasts, a religion of justice and grace, of fear and love, of obedience and liberty, of activity and repose, of faith and reason; for if error has cut up and divided every thing in man, if it has made of his soul a vast scene of contradictions, truth brings back all into unity. Such is the religion which never entered into the heart of man, even in the highest culture of his moral sense, and the most extensive development of his intelligence; or, as the apostle expresses it, "which none of the princes of this world have known."

That which remained concealed from philosophers and sages, in the most brilliant periods of the human intellect, twelve poor fishermen, from the lakes of Judea, quitted their nets to announce to the world. Certainly they had not more of imagination, of reason, of heart, or of conscience, than the rest of mankind; yet they put to silence the wisdom of sages, emptied the schools of philosophers, closed the gates of every temple, extinguished the fire on every altar. They exhibited to the world their crucified Master, and the world recognized in him that which their anxious craving had sought in vain for three thousand years. A new morality, new social relations, and a new universe sprung into being, at the voice of these poor people, ignorant of letters and of all philosophy. It remains with your good sense to judge, if these twelve fishermen have used their own wisdom, or the wisdom which cometh from above.

We stop at this point,—man is found incapable of forming a religion, and God has come to the aid of his weakness. Bless, then, your God, from the bottom of your heart, you who after long search have at last found an asylum. And you who still float on the vast sea of human opinions, you who, violently driven from one system to another, feel your anguish increasing, and your heart becoming more and more tarnished; you who to this day

have never been able to live with God, nor without God,—come and see, if this gospel, scarcely noticed by your heedless eyes, is not perhaps that for which you call with so many fruitless sighs. And, thou, God of the Gospel! God of nations! Infinite Love! reveal thyself to wounded hearts, make thyself known to fainting spirits, and cause them to know joy, peace, and true virtue.

II.

THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Things which have not entered into the heart of man."—1 Cor., ii, 9.

WE have seen that we are not in a condition to give ourselves a religion, and that God, in his goodness, has condescended to aid our weakness. But the reason of man does not voluntarily permit itself to be convinced of impotence; it does not willingly suffer its limits to be prescribed; it is strongly tempted to reject ideas which it has not conceived, a religion which it has not invented; and if the doctrines proposed to it are, in their nature, mysterious and incomprehensible, this feeling of dissatisfaction proceeds to open revolt, and, in the case of many, results in an obstinate scepticism.

I do not comprehend, therefore I do not believe; the Gospel is full of mysteries, therefore I do not receive the Gospel;—such is one of the favourite arguments of infidelity. To see how much is made of this, and what confidence it inspires, we might believe it solid, or, at least, specious; but it is neither the one nor the other; it will not bear the slightest attention, the most superficial examination of reason; and if it still enjoys some favour in the world, this is but a proof of the lightness of our judgments upon things worthy of our most serious attention.

Upon what, in fact, does this argument rest? Upon the claim of comprehending every thing in the religion which God has offered or could offer us. A claim equally *unjust*, *unreasonable*, *useless*. This we proceed to develope.

In the first place, it is an unjust claim. It is to demand of God what he does not owe us. To prove this, let us suppose that God has given a religion to man, and let us further suppose this religion to be the Gospel; for this absolutely charges nothing to the argument. We may believe that God was free, at least, with reference

to us, to give us or not to give us a religion; but it must be admitted that in granting it, he contracts engagements to us, and that the first favour lays him under a necessity of conferring other favours. For this is merely to say, that God must be consistent, and that he finishes what he has begun. Since it is by a written revelation he manifests his designs respecting us, it is necessary he should fortify that revelation by all the authority which would at least determine us to receive it; it is necessary he should give us the means of judging whether the men who speak to us in his name are really sent by him; in a word, it is necessary we should be assured that the Bible is truly the word of God.

It would not indeed be necessary that the conviction of each of us should be gained by the same kind of evidence. Some shall be led to Christianity by the historical or external arguments; they shall prove to themselves the truth of the Bible, as the truth of all history is proved; they shall satisfy themselves that the books of which it is composed are certainly those of the times and of the authors to which they are ascribed. This settled, they shall compare the prophecies contained in these ancient documents with the events that have happened in subsequent ages; they shall assure themselves of the reality of the miraculous facts related in these books, and shall thence infer the necessary intervention of Divine power, which alone disposes the forces of nature, and can alone interrupt or modify their action. Others, less fitted for such investigations, shall be struck with the internal evidence of the holy Scriptures. Finding there the state of their souls perfectly described, their wants fully expressed, and the true remedies for their maladies completely indicated; struck with a character of truth and candour which nothing can imitate; in fine, feeling themselves, in their inner nature, moved, changed, renovated, by the mysterious influence of these holy writings, they shall acquire, by such means, a conviction of which they cannot always give an account to others, but which is not the less legitimate, irresistible, and immovable. Such is the double road by which an entrance is gained into the asylum of faith. But it was due from the wisdom of God, from his justice, and, we venture to say it, from the honour of his government, that he should open to man this double road; for if he desired man to be saved by knowledge, on the same principle he engaged himself to furnish him the means of knowledge.

Behold, whence come the obligations of the Deity with reference to us,—which obligations he has fulfilled. Enter on this double method of proof. Interrogate history, time, and places, respecting the authenticity of the Scriptures; grasp all the difficulties, sound all the objections; do not permit yourselves to be too easily convinced; be the more severe upon that book, as it professes to contain the sovereign rule of your life, and the disposal of your destiny; you are permitted to do this, nay, you are encouraged to do it, provided you proceed to the investigation with the requisite capacities and with pure intentions. Or, if you prefer another method, examine, with an honest heart, the contents of the Scriptures; enquire, while you run over the words of Jesus, if ever man spake like this man; enquire if the wants of your soul, long deceived, and the anxieties of your spirit, long cherished in vain, do not, in the teaching and work of Christ, find that satisfaction and repose which no wisdom was ever able to procure you; breathe, if I may thus express myself, that perfume of truth, of candour, and purity which exhales from every page of the Gospel; see if, in all these respects, it does not bear the undeniable seal of inspiration and divinity. Finally, test it, and if the Gospel produces upon you a contrary effect, return to the books and the wisdom of men, and ask of them what Christ has not been able to give you. But if, neglecting these two ways, made accessible to you, and trodden by the feet of ages, you desire, before all, that the Christian religion should, in every point, render itself comprehensible to your mind, and complacently strip itself of all its mysteries; if you wish to penetrate beyond the vail, to find there, not the aliment which gives life to the soul, but that which would gratify your restless curiosity, I maintain that you raise against God a claim the most indiscreet, the most rash and unjust; for he has never engaged, either tacitly or expressly, to discover to you the secret which your eye craves; and such audacious importunity is fit only to excite his indignation. He has given you what he owed you, more indeed than he owed you;—the rest is with himself.

If a claim so unjust could be admitted, where, I ask you, would be the limit of your demands? Already you require more from God than he has accorded to angels; for these eternal mysteries which trouble you,—the harmony of the divine prescience with human freedom,—the origin of evil and its ineffable remedy,—the

incarnation of the eternal WORD,—the relations of the God-man with his Father,—the atoning virtue of his sacrifice,—the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit-comforter,—all these things are secrets, the knowledge of which is hidden from angels themselves, who, according to the word of the apostle, stoop to explore their depths, and cannot. If you reproach the Eternal for having kept the knowledge of these divine mysteries to himself, why do you not reproach him for the thousand other limits he has prescribed to you? Why not reproach him for not having given you wings, like a bird, to visit the regions which till now have been scanned only by your eyes? Why not reproach him for not giving you, besides the five senses with which you are provided, ten other senses which he has perhaps granted to other creatures, and which procure for them perceptions of which you have no idea? Why not, in fine, reproach him for having caused the darkness of night to succeed the brightness of day invariably on the earth? Ah! you do not reproach him for that. You love that night which brings rest to so many fatigued bodies and weary spirits; which suspends, in so many wretches, the feeling of grief;—that night during which orphans, slaves, and criminals cease to be, because over all their misfortunes and sufferings it spreads, with the opiate of sleep, the thick vail of oblivion; you love that night, which, peopling the deserts of the heavens with ten thousand stars, not known to the day, reveals the infinite to our ravished imagination. Well, then, why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of divine mysteries, —night, gracious and salutary, in which reason humbles itself, and finds refreshment and repose; where the darkness even is a revelation; where one of the principal attributes of God, immensity, discovers itself much more fully to our mind; where, in fine, the tender relations he has permitted us to form with himself, are guarded from all admixture of familiarity, by the thought, that the Being who has humbled himself to us, is, at the same time, the inconceivable God who reigns before all time, who includes in himself all existences and all conditions of existence,—the centre of all thought, the law of all law, the supreme and final reason of every thing! So that if you are just, instead of reproaching him for the secrets of religion, you will bless him that he has enveloped you in mysteries.

But this claim is not only unjust towards God; it is also in itself exceedingly *unreasonable.*

What is religion? It is God putting himself in communication with man; the Creator with the creature, the infinite with the finite. There already, without going further, is a mystery; a mystery common to all religions, impenetrable in all religions. If, then, everything which is a mystery offends you, you are arrested on the threshold, I will not say of Christianity, but of every religion; I say, even of that religion which is called *natural*, because it rejects revelation and miracles; for it necessarily implies, at the very least, a connection, a communication of some sort between God and man,—the contrary being equivalent to atheism. Your claim prevents you from having any belief; and because you have not been willing to be Christians, it will not be allowed you to be deists.

"It is of no consequence," you say, "we pass over that difficulty; we suppose between God and us connections we cannot conceive; we admit them because they are necessary to us. But this is the only step we are willing to take; we have already yielded too much to yield more." Say more,—say you have granted too much not to grant much more, not to grant all! You have consented to admit, without comprehending it, that there may be communications from God to you, and from you to God. But consider well what is implied in such a supposition. It implies that you are dependent, and yet free,—this you do not comprehend;—it implies that the Spirit of God can make itself understood by your spirit,—this you do not comprehend;—it implies that your prayers may exert an influence on the will of God,—this you do not comprehend. It is necessary you should swallow all these mysteries, in order to establish with God connections the most vague and superficial, and by the very side of which atheism is placed. And when, by a powerful effort with yourselves, you have done so much as to admit these mysteries, you recoil from those of Christianity! You have accepted the foundation, and refuse the superstructure! You have accepted the principle, and refuse the details! You are right, no doubt, so soon as it is proved to you that the religion which contains these mysteries does not come from God; or rather, these mysteries contain contradictory ideas. But you are not justified in denying them, for the sole reason that you

do not understand them; and the reception you have given to the first kind of mysteries compels you, by the same rule, to receive the others.

This is not all. Not only are mysteries an inseparable part, nay, the very substance of all religion; but it is absolutely impossible that a true religion should not present a great number of mysteries. If it is true, it ought to teach more truths respecting God and divine things than any other, than all others together; but each of these truths has a relation to the infinite, and by consequence borders on a mystery. How should it be otherwise in religion, when it is thus in nature itself? Behold God in nature! The more he gives us to contemplate, the more he gives to astonish! To each creature is attached some mystery. Each grain of sand is an abyss! Now, if the manifestation which God has made of himself in nature suggests to the observer a thousand questions which cannot be answered, how will it be when to that first revelation another is added; when God the Creator and Preserver reveals himself under new aspects as God the Reconciler and Saviour? Shall not mysteries multiply with discoveries? With each new day shall we not see associated a new night? And shall we not purchase each increase of knowledge with an increase of ignorance? Has not the doctrine of grace, so necessary, so consoling, alone opened a profound abyss, into which, for eighteen centuries, rash and restless spirits have been constantly plunging?

It is, then, clearly necessary that Christianity should, more than any other religion, be mysterious, simply because is is true. Like mountains, which, the higher they are, cast the larger shadows, the Gospel is the more obscure and mysterious on account of its sublimity. After this, will you be indignant that you do not comprehend everything in the Gospel? It would, forsooth, be a truly surprising thing, if the ocean could not be held in the hollow of your hand, or uncreated wisdom within the limits of your intelligence! It would be truly unfortunate, if a finite being could not embrace the infinite, and that, in the vast assemblage of things, there should be some idea beyond its grasp! In other words, it would be truly unfortunate, if God himself should know something which man does not know.

Let us acknowledge, then, how insensate is such a claim when it is made with reference to religion.

But let us also recollect how much, in making such a claim, we shall be in opposition to ourselves; for the submission we dislike in religion we cherish in a thousand other things. It happens to us every day to admit things we do not understand; and to do so without the least repugnance. The things the knowledge of which is refused us are much more numerous than we perhaps think. Few diamonds are perfectly pure; still fewer truths are perfectly clear. The union of our soul with our body is a mystery; our most familiar emotions and affections are a mystery; the action of thought and will is a mystery; our very existence is a mystery. Why do we admit all these various facts? Is it because we understand them? No, certainly,—but because they are self-evident, and because they are truths by which we live. In religion we have no other course to take. We ought to know whether it is true and necessary; and once convinced of these two points, we ought, like the angels, to submit to the necessity of being ignorant of some things.

And why do we not submit cheerfully to a privation which after all is not one? To desire the knowledge of mysteries is to desire what is utterly *useless*; it is to raise, as I have said before, a claim the most vain and idle. What, in reference to us, is the object of the Gospel? Evidently to regenerate and save us. But it attains this end entirely by the things it reveals. Of what use would it be to know those it conceals from us? We possess the knowledge which can enlighten our consciences, rectify our inclinations, renew our hearts; what should we gain, if we possessed other knowledge? It infinitely concerns us to know that the Bible is the word of God. Does it equally concern us to know in what way the holy men who wrote it were moved by the Holy Ghost? It is of infinite importance for us to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Need we know precisely and in what way the divine and human nature are united in his adorable person? It is of infinite importance for us to know that unless we are born again we cannot enter the kingdom of God, and that the Holy Spirit is the author of that new birth;—shall we be further advanced if we know the divine process by which that wonder is performed? Is it not enough for us to know the truths that save? Of what use, then, would it be to know those which have not the slightest bearing on our salvation? "Though I knew all mysteries," says St. Paul,

"and have not charity, I am nothing." St. Paul was content not to know, provided he had charity; shall not we, following his example, be content also without knowledge, provided that, like him, we have charity, that is to say, life?

But some one will say, If the knowledge of mysteries is really without influence on our salvation, why have they been indicated to us at all? What if it should be to teach us not to be too prodigal of our *wherefores!* if it should be to serve as an exercise of our faith, a test of our submission! But we will not stop with such a reply.

Observe, I pray you, in what manner the mysteries of which you complain have taken their part in religion. You readily perceive they are not by themselves, but associated with truths which have a direct bearing on your salvation. They contain them, they serve to envelope them; but they are not themselves the truths that save. It is with these mysteries as it is with the vessel which contains a medicinal draught; it is not the vessel that cures, but the draught; yet the draught could not be presented without the vessel. Thus each truth that saves is contained in a mystery which in itself has no power to save. So the great work of expiation is necessarily attached to the incarnation of the Son of God, which is a mystery; so the sanctifying graces of the new covenant are necessarily connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is a mystery; so, too, the divinity of religion finds a seal and an attestation in the miracles, which are mysteries. Every where the light is born from darkness, and darkness accompanies the light. These two orders of truth are so united, so interlinked, that you cannot remove the one without the other; and each of the mysteries you attempt to tear from religion would carry with it one of the truths which bear directly on your regeneration and salvation. Accept the mysteries, then, not as truths that can save you, but as the necessary conditions of the merciful work of the Lord in your behalf.

The true point at issue in reference to religion is this:—Does the religion which is proposed to us change the heart, unite to God, prepare for heaven? If Christianity produces these effects, we will leave the enemies of the cross free to revolt against its mysteries, and tax them with absurdity. The Gospel, we will say to them, is then an absurdity; you have discovered it. But behold

what a new species of absurdity that certainly is which attaches man to all his duties, regulates human life better than all the doctrines of sages, plants in his bosom harmony, order, and peace, causes him joyfully to fulfil all the offices of civil life, renders him better fitted to live, better fitted to die, and which, were it generally received, would be the support and safeguard of society! Cite to us, among all human absurdities, a single one which produces such effects. If that "foolishness" we preach produces effects like these, is it not natural to conclude that it is truth itself? And if these things have not entered the heart of man, it is not because they are absurd, but because they are divine.

Make, my readers, but a single reflection. You are obliged to confess that none of the religions which man may invent can satisfy his wants, or save his soul. Thereupon you have a choice to make. You will either reject them all as insufficient and false, and seek for nothing better, since man cannot invent better, and then you will abandon to chance, to caprice of temperament or of opinion, your moral life and future destiny; or you will adopt that other religion which some treat as folly, and it will render you holy and pure, blameless in the midst of a perverse generation, united to God by love, and to your brethren by charity, indefatigable in doing good, happy in life, happy in death. Suppose, after all this, you shall be told that this religion is false; but, meanwhile, it has restored in you the image of God, re-established your primitive connections with that great Being, and put you in a condition to enjoy life and the happiness of heaven. By means of it you have become such that at the last day, it is impossible that God should not receive you as his children, and make you partakers of his glory. You are made fit for paradise, nay, paradise has commenced for you even here, because you love. This religion has done for you what all religion proposes, and what no other has realized. Nevertheless, by the supposition, it is false! And what more could it do, were it true? Rather do you not see that this is a splendid proof of its truth? Do you not see that it is impossible that a religion which leads to God should not come from God, and that the absurdity is precisely that of supposing that you can be regenerated by a falsehood.

Suppose that afterwards, as at the first, you do not comprehend. It is apparently neccessary you should be saved by the things you

do not comprehend. Is that a misfortune? Are you the less saved? Does it become you to demand from God an account of an obscurity which does not injure you, when, with reference to every thing essential, he has been prodigal of light? The first disciples of Jesus, men without culture and learning, received the truths they did not comprehend, and spread them through the world. A crowd of sages and men of genius have received, from the hands of these poor people, truths which they comprehend no more than they. The ignorance of the one, and the science of the other, have been equally docile. Do, then, as the ignorant and the wise have done. Embrace with affection those truths which have never entered into your heart, and which will save you. Do not lose, in vain discussions, the time which is gliding away, and which is bearing you into the cheering or appalling light of eternity. Hasten to be saved. Love now; one day you will know. May the Lord Jesus prepare you for that period of light, of repose, and of happiness!

III.

THE GOSPEL COMPREHENDED BY THE HEART.

"Things which have not entered into the heart of man, but which God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor., ii, 9.

GOD has destined the world to be, not only the theatre of our activity, but also the object of our study. He has concealed in the depths of nature innumerable secrets, which he invites us to fathom; innumerable truths, which he encourages us to discover. To penetrate these secrets, to discover these truths, it is necessary to possess certain intellectual faculties, and to have them suitably exercised, but nothing more. The dispositions of the heart have no direct influence on the acquisition of this kind of knowledge. It is with this knowledge as it is with "the rain, which God causeth to fall on the just and the unjust, and the sun which he maketh to shine upon the good and the evil." To acquire it does not necessarily suppose a pure heart or a benevolent character; and, unhappily, it is too common to see the finest gifts of genius united with the most deplorable selfishness and the deepest depravity of manners. God seems to have prepared the truths of human science indifferently for his friends and enemies. It is not thus with the truths of religion. God, it is said, in the Scriptures, "hath prepared them for those that love him." Not that he has excluded from the possession of them men of learning and genius; but neither learning nor genius is sufficient here as in the other sciences. Love is the true interpreter of the truths of the Gospel. The "wisdom of this world and of the princes of this world" is vanquished by the simplicity of love, love and wisdom among them that are perfect, conformably to that declaration of St. John, "He that loveth God is born of God and knoweth God."

That which is often seen occurring between two persons of different languages takes place between God and man; it is necessary that a person versed in both languages should intervene between

the two parties, and listening to the words of one, put them within reach of the other, by rendering them into the idiom he understands. But between God and man, between the Gospel and our soul, that interpreter is love. Love renders intelligible to man the truths of the Gospel, not, indeed, those abstract truths which relate to the essence of God, the knowledge of which, as we have seen, is equally inaccessible and useless to us,—but those other truths which concern our relations to God, and constitute the very foundation of religion. These are the truths which escape from reason, and which love seizes without difficulty.

You are surprised, perhaps, to see filled by love, by a sentiment of the heart, a function which seems to you to belong only to reason. But please to reflect that the greater part of our knowledge is derived to us immediately from another source than reason. When we desire to obtain a knowledge of a natural object, it is, primarily, our senses we make use of, and not our reason. It is at first by sight that we acquire a knowledge of the size and form of bodies; by hearing, that of sounds; and by smell, that of odours. It is necessary that reason should afterwards perform a part, and connect its operations with those of the organs; but whatever may be the importance of its intervention, we must admit that the knowledge of sensible objects and their properties is derived essentially from the senses.

Things transpire in no other way in the moral world. It is not by the intellect alone, nor by the intellect first, that we can judge of things of this order. To know then we must have a sense also, which is called the moral sense. The intellect may come in afterwards as an auxiliary; it observes, compares, and classes our impressions, but it does not produce them; and it would be as little reasonable to pretend that we owe them to it, as to affirm that it is by the ear we obtain the knowledge of colours, by sight that of perfumes, and by smell that of sounds and harmonies. The things of the heart are not truly comprehended but by the heart.

Permit us to dwell a moment upon this idea; for we feel the necessity of explaining it thoroughly. In saying that the heart comprehends, do we say that it becomes reason, or that it conducts a process of reasoning? By no means. The heart does not comprehend like the reason; but it comprehends as well, if not better. As to the reason, what is it to comprehend? It is to seize the

thread of logical deduction, the chain of ideas which joins together two or more facts; it is to attain conviction, assurance, by means other than experience; it is to be placed by the intellect in relative connection with those objects, an immediate contact with which is denied us. The comprehension of the mind, to speak plainly, is nothing more than a supplement to the inevitable chasms in our experience.[1] These chasms occur either from the absence of the objects themselves, or from their nature, which has no point of contact with ours. If these two obstacles did not exist, or if it were possible to remove them, man would have nothing to comprehend; for he would touch, he would grasp, he would taste every thing. Reason in him would be replaced by intuition. Wherever tuition has place there is no more comprehension, for it is more than comprehension; or if any chooses that it should be comprehension, it is a comprehension of a new nature, of a superior order, which explains every thing without effort, to which every thing is clear, but which it cannot communicate by words to the reason of another.

But it is the same with the comprehension of the heart. Doubtless it has its precise limits. It extends to every thing within the domain of sentiment, but to nothing beyond. Reason, however, has its limits, also, quite as distinctly marked, and can no more overleap them than the heart those which belong to it. Applied to things which belong exclusively to the sphere of sentiment, it wanders in obscurity; it passes by the side of sentiment as if it were a stranger; it neither understands nor is understood; and retires from a useless struggle, without having either taken or given any thing. Reason on the one side, and the heart on the other, do not comprehend each other. They have no mutual agreement except in that of a disdainful pity.

1 The word *experience* is here used in its strictly philosophical sense. It embraces the facts of sensation and consciousness, the emotions and perceptions of the mind. These constitute an assemblage of facts, which it is the province of reason first to analyze, and then combine, under general heads or systems: and thus supply the deficiencies or *chasms* in our experience. It especially perceives and classifies relations, and deduces from the whole those general ideas which embody, in their comprehensive range, an infinite number of scattered but related facts. Reason, therefore, is a *supplement* to our experience, and is a purely intellectual process. It involves no feeling or affection, and may exist, in the greatest perfection, without a single holy or virtuous impulse.—T.

To render this truth more evident, suppose on the one hand, a generous man, a hero, a soul ever burning with the lofty flame of devotion; and on the other, a man of quick intelligence, of reason vast and profound, but deprived, were it possible, of all sensibility, do you not believe that the first would, all his life long, be an enigma to the other? How indeed could the latter conceive of those transports of enthusiasm, those acts of self-denial, and those sublime expressions, the source of which never existed in his own soul? "The spiritual man," says St. Paul, "judgeth all things, and no one (unless spiritual) can judge him." Let us, by supposition, apply this expression to the sensitive and generous being of whom we speak; no one, unless he has the germs of the same emotions, can form a judgment of him;—a fact distinctly recognized by those who have said, that great souls pass through the world without being understood.

Affectation! hypocrisy! is the cry frequently heard in view of certain manifestations, and especially of religious manifestations. An ardour which glows in the depths of the soul, which engrosses all the faculties, and which is incessantly renewed from its own proper source, appears to some too strange to be credited. In order to believe it, they need only to feel it; but certain it is, that unless they do feel it, they cannot conceive of it. And they will continue to tax with affectation and hypocrisy a sentiment which perhaps restrains itself, and discovers only half of its energy. A mistake, how natural! All the efforts of the most active intellect cannot give us the conception of the taste of a fruit we have never tasted, or the perfume of a flower we have never smelt, much less of an affection we have never felt.

It is with the heights of the soul as it is with the sublimities of the firmament. When, on a serene night, millions of stars sparkle in the depths of the sky, the gorgeous splendour of the starry vault ravishes every one that has eyes; but he to whom Providence has denied the blessing of sight would in vain possess a mind open to the loftiest conceptions; in vain would his intellectual capacity transcend what is common among men. All that intelligence, and all the power he might add by study to his rare gifts, will not aid him in forming a single idea of that ravishing spectacle; while at his side, a man without talent or culture has only to raise his eyes to embrace at a glance, and in some measure to enjoy, all the

splendours of the firmament, and, through his vision, to receive into his soul the impressions which such a spectacle cannot fail to produce.

Another sky, and one as magnificent as the azure vault stretched over our heads, is revealed to us in the Gospel. Divine truths are the stars of that mystic sky, and they shine in it brighter and purer than the stars of the firmament; but there must be an eye to see them, and that eye is love. The Gospel is a work of love. Christianity is only love realized under its purest form; and since the light of the world cannot be known without an eye, love cannot be comprehended but by the heart.

You may have exhausted all the powers of your reason, and all the resources of your knowledge, to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures; you may have perfectly explained the apparent contradictions of the sacred books; you may have grasped the connection of the fundamental truths of the Gospel. You may have done all this, yet if you do not love, the Gospel will be to you nothing but a dead letter and a sealed book; its revelations will appear to you but as abstractions and naked ideas; its system but a speculation unique in its kind: nay more, whatever in the Gospel is most attractive, most precious and sweet, but an arbitrary conception, a strange dogma, a painful test of your faith, and nothing more.

But let love, sweet, gracious, luminous, interpreting, come between the Gospel and the human soul, and the truth of the Gospel shall have a meaning,—and one as clear as it is profound. Then shall your soul find itself free and happy in the midst of these strange revelations. Then shall those truths you have accepted, through submission and obedience, become to you as familiar and as necessarily true as those common every-day truths upon which depends your existence. Then shall you penetrate without an effort, into the marvellous system which your reason dreaded, so to speak, to see too near, in a confused apprehension of being tempted to infidelity. Then shall you probably be astonished that you had never perceived, conjectured, discovered it; that previous to revelation you had never found out that such a system was as necessary to the glory of God as to the happiness of man.

So long as man, with reason alone, has climbed up Calvary, and gone around the cross, he has seen nothing but darkness in the

divine work of expiation. For whole ages might he remain in contemplation before that mysterious fact, but would not succeed in raising from it the vail. Ah! how can reason, cold reason, comprehend such a thing as the substitution of the innocent for the guilty; as the compassion which reveals itself in severity of punishment, in that shedding of blood without which, it is said, there can be no expiation. It will not make, I dare affirm, a single step towards the knowledge of that divine mystery, until casting away its ungrateful speculations, it yields to a power more capable the task of terminating the difficulty. That power is the heart; which fixes itself entirely on the love that shines forth in the work of redemption; cleaves without distraction to the sacrifice of the adorable victim; lets the natural impression of that unparalleled love penetrate freely, and develope itself gradually, in its interior. O how quickly, then, are the vails torn away, and the shadows dissipated for ever! How little difficulty does he that loves find in comprehending love! How natural to him does it appear, that God, infinite in all things, should be infinite also in his compassion! How inconceivable to him, on the other hand, that human hearts should not be capable of feeling the beauty of a work without which God could not manifest himself entire! How astonished is he at the blindness of those who read and re-read the Scriptures without comprehending the central truth; who pass and re-pass before a love all divine without recognizing or even perceiving a work all divine!

The holy Scriptures have spoken to him of prayer as a powerful mean of attracting the grace of God; as a force to which divine power is willing to submit, and which seems, in some sense, to share, with the Deity the empire of the universe. Before such an idea reason remains confounded. There is no objection it does not involuntarily raise against a doctrine which, after all, belongs to the very essence of religion. But to the heart how beautiful is this doctrine; how natural, how probable, how necessary! How eagerly the heart embraces it! How it hastens to put it in the rank of its most cherished convictions! And how wretchedly and foolishly *wise* do those appear to it, who, feeling on the one hand, that religion without prayer is not religion, and on the other, that the bearing of prayer upon their destinies is inexplicable, resolve to remain in uncertainty on the subject, waiting and not praying at all!

It is the same with many other mysteries of Christianity, or rather with Christianity as a whole. Even to those who receive it as a divine religion, and believe it intellectually, it is vailed, it is empty, it is dead, so long as they do not call the heart to their aid. Among sincere believers, there are many who have gone around Christianity, a religion of their intellect, as around an impenetrable sanctuary, knocking in turn at all the doors of that asylum, without finding one open, and returning without success to those already tried many times, believing and not believing at the same time, Christians by their wishes, pagans by their hopes, convinced but not persuaded, enlightened but not consoled. To such I address myself; I appeal to their sincerity, and ask them, Whence comes it that you believe, and as yet have only the responsibilities, not the blessings, of faith? How happens it, that you carry your faith as a yoke that oppresses and weighs you down, not as wings which raise you above your miseries and the world? How comes it, that, in the bosom of that religion you have accepted, you are strangers, exiles, and as if out of your natural atmosphere? How is it that you are not at home in your father's house? Let us put the finger upon the wound. It is that your heart is not yet touched. The heart of Lydia must be *opened* before she can understand the things spoken by Paul. So also your heart must be opened in order to understand the truths which only the heart can understand. Or, to use the energetic language of Scripture, the heart of flesh must take, in your bosom, the place of the heart of stone.

Alas! with a conviction firmly established, with an orthodoxy the most perfect, how many do we see, strangers to true faith, how many sceptical believers, how many who have not doubted the truth of the Scriptures a single day of their life, who read them assiduously, who know them even by heart, and who, notwithstanding all this, do not believe at all! Ah, it is that faith is something else than the product of the intellect; it is that faith is love. Knowledge may give us convictions; love alone gives us life.

The first advice that reason ought to give us should be to refuse reason in everything which does not belong to its jurisdiction. But reason is proud, reason is dogmatic; it will not submit. What then does our heavenly Father do when he desires to save a soul? He leaves it for a time, to struggle with its speculations, and to

vex itself with their impotence. When it is weary and despairing, when it has acknowledged that it is equally incapable of stifling or of satisfying its craving for light, he takes advantage of its humiliation; he lays his hand upon that soul, exhausted by its efforts, wounded by its falls, and compels it to sue for quarter. Then it humbles itself, submits, groans; it cries for succour; it renounces the claim to know, and desires only to believe; it pretends not to comprehend, it only aspires to live. Then the heart commences its functions; it takes the place of reason; anguish and craving, the heart is such as God would have it. It sues for grace, and lo! there is grace; it asks for aid, and aid comes; it craves salvation, and salvation is given! On that heart, confused and miserable, is then bestowed, nay, lavished, all that was refused to reason, proud and haughty. Its poverty enables it to conceive what its wealth kept it from knowing. It comprehends with ease, it accepts with ardour, the truths which it needs, and without which no human soul can enjoy peace or happiness. And thus is fulfilled the word of wisdom: "Out of the heart proceed the springs of life."

Will ye come, proud spirits, and demand from such an one an account of his faith? Certainly he will not explain to you what is inexplicable; in this respect he will send you away poorly satisfied. But if he says to you, if he can say to you,—I love!—ought not such a response to satisfy you? If he can say,—I no longer belong to myself, nor to honour, nor to the world; my meat is to do the will of my heavenly Father; I aspire to eternal good; I love, in God, all my brethren, with a cordial affection; I am content to live, I shall be happy to die; henceforth, all is harmony within me; my energies and activities, my destiny and desires, my affections and thoughts, are all in accordance; the world, this life, and human things are not the mystery which torments me, nor the contradiction that causes me to despair; in a word, I am raised to newness of life. If he says, he can say to you all this, and his whole life corroborates his words, ah, then, do not waste on him vain reasonings; try not to refute him; he has truth, for he has life. He touches with his hands, he sees with his eyes, he perceives, in some sort, with all his senses, a truth which all the arguments in the world could not establish with so much certainty, which all the arguments in the world cannot shake. Does the person who enjoys sight need to

be told there is light? Can one in good health be persuaded he is sick? These are irrefragable verities, the proof of which is in himself, nay more, of which he is himself the living proof.

Thus the truths of the Gospel have changed his heart; but the Spirit of God must, first of all, have prepared it to receive them. Let us not lose sight of these two facts:—it is the Gospel which renews us, and it is the Spirit of God which enables us to receive the Gospel into our heart. When we have received it, when, in our heart, lately sick and insane, love has established his immutable empire, that love becomes an abundant source of light. By it a thousand obscurities of the word are cleared away. Its flame imparts no less light than heat. Delightful thought! the more we love the more we know. Such is the experience of the Christian. Do you not wish to feel it, slaves of reason, melancholy victims of a knowledge which mistakes its limits and exaggerates its rights? Ye who know, but do not live, will ye not ask from God love in order to comprehend love, love in order to know, love in order to live?

O God, whom we should never have known hadst thou not deigned to discover thyself to us in the light of the Gospel, complete the great work thou hast begun. Give us a heart to understand the truths thou hast revealed! Let the light of love, shed in our hearts by thee, disperse all the obscurities of thy word! Let thy goodness, let thy marvellous wisdom, keep from us no other secrets than those which are useless for us to know; teach us by love the most perfect of all wisdom; render the most simple wise in the science of salvation! Thy Spirit, O Lord, is love, as thou thyself art love. Diffuse it through the whole earth; spread in every place that holy flame; attract all hearts to thyself; make of all souls one single soul, in a common sentiment of adoration and devotion! Lord! we shall know all when we know how to love; shall rejoice in a light which is not the product of laborious study, but one which sanctifies and consoles! Then truly shalt thou have spoken to us in the Gospel. Then shall it be seen that thou hast given to us a message of love and peace; and our conviction, cold, sterile, useless, shall be changed into a living faith, full of hope, full of good fruits.

IV.

FOLLY OF THE TRUTH.[1]

"We preach Christ crucified, ... to the Greeks foolishness."—1 Cor., i, 23.

CHRISTIANITY has not left to infidelity the satisfaction of being the first to tax it with folly. It has hastened to bring this accusation against itself. It has professed the bold design of saving men by a folly. Upon this point it has suffered no illusion; it knew that its doctrine would pass for an insane one, it knew it before experience of the fact, before any one had said it; and it went forth, with this folly on its lips, this folly for a standard, to the conquest of the world. If, then, it is foolish, it is so consciously and voluntarily; and those who reproach it on this account will at least be obliged to confess that it has foreseen their reproach and braved it.

Never did so calm a foresight, so just an appreciation of obstacles, means, and chances, distinguish the author of a system, or the founder of a religion. Never did any one enter so fully into the spirit of his opponents, and transport himself so completely from his own point of view to theirs. When it is seen in what respect Christianity judges itself contrary to the world, and the world contrary to it, we have an idea of incompatibility so essential and profound that we cannot help asking, with what hope, and so to speak, with what right, does such a religion propose itself to the world; and a choice remains only between two suppositions, that of an extravagance absolutely unparalleled, or of a secret inspiration and a supernatural power.

Of course, we should not dream of pretending that this characteristic of a doctrine was by itself a presumption in favour of its truth. Error, too, may have the appearance of folly, for error is

[1] The word *folie* is used by French medical writers for *insanity*; and it is to madness, rather than simple folly, to which our author in this discourse refers.—T.

sometimes a folly ; I mean in the judgment of men ; for it is doubtless such in the eyes of God. But this we say, that, if religion were destitute of such a characteristic, we could not presume it to be true. A religion which should appear reasonable to the whole world, could not be the true one ; in that general assent accorded to it, without opposition, I recognize the fact that God has not spoken ; the seal is not broken, the light has not burst forth ; I must still wait.

This idea itself is not a folly ; and if its truth does not strike at first, if it does not present itself as a revelation of common sense, it is deduced without difficulty from other truths which common sense reveals, and which no man, unless deprived of this very common sense, dreams of disavowing. Every one, if he will reason a little, will range himself on the side of this paradox, and will see this strange idea gradually become an obvious truth. Every one will acknowledge that true religion must, at its first appearance among men, be saluted from all sides with that accusation of folly which Christianity has so loftily braved.

Let us leave to philosophers and physicians the task of exactly defining insanity. It has at least one constant characteristic, that it renders a man unfit for human life, taking life, in this instance, only in its essential conditions. The madman and the idiot do not form a part of society, to which the weakest, the most ignorant, and I will almost say, the most savage of men are not permitted, in all the force of the term, to belong. Insanity, which in other respects has no connection with crime, must at least have this, in common with it, that it throws us violently out of the pale of humanity. It is a monstrosity in the sphere of intellect. But as the evidence of such monstrosity is to believe or see something which no man, rightly constituted, and healthy in body and mind, believes and sees,—since it is necessarily under such an aspect that insanity manifests itself,—it follows, that wherever this characteristic discovers itself it awakens the idea of insanity. So that even a man who is not destitute of any of the conditions which compose our idea of humanity, is, nevertheless, for the want of a better term, designated a fool, when by his opinions he is found alone in the midst of his nation or his age ; and if he meets with partizans, real or pretended, they share with him, so long as their number is small, the same title and the same disgrace.

Not only an opinion which all the world rejects, but a hope which no one shares, or a plan with which no one associates himself, brings the charge of folly, before the multitude, against the rash man who has conceived it, and who cherishes it. His opinion may seem just, and his aim reasonable; he is a fool only for wishing to realize it. His folly lies in believing possible what all the world esteems impossible. Nay, he is a fool at a cheaper rate than even this. If, renouncing hope, he does not abandon desire; if he makes his happiness depend upon an end impossible to be attained, or an improvement impossible to be accomplished; if, in the absence of a good which appears to him indispensable, of an ideal which has become, as it were, a part of his soul, he judges his life lost, and finds no relish in any of the joys which it offers to the rest of mankind, though in other respects he fulfil all the duties which his condition as a man imposes on him, the victim and sport of a fixed idea, he is a madman, at least with reference to that particular point; and the respect which others feel for him does not hinder them from pronouncing insane a grief which they do not understand.

They do not always apply to him this opprobrious epithet; but what they do not say they think; what they do not proclaim they permit to be seen. That man, they say, is not indeed a fool, but he has a foolish notion. For insanity is not necessarily a darkness in which the whole soul is enveloped; it is sometimes only a dark spot in a brilliant light. The shadows are more or less thick, more or less diffused. There are degrees of insanity; after all, it is insanity. We need not dispute about a term; and the world will ever call him foolish who desires to be wise all alone.

In other respects, indeed, the world is willing that one should be wise. It says so, at least; but it does not recognize any wisdom contrary to the opinion and practice of the majority. It honours principles; it is willing, indeed, that we should regulate ourselves by them; but it might be said, that it really knows none but the authority of numbers. At least numbers and also time are, in its eyes, so strong a presumption of truth, that it rarely gives itself the trouble to examine if one or a few individuals may not be right in opposition to all; and it appears as if it would compel the truth, which has nothing in common with space and time to derive itself entirely from space and time.

This prepossession is not without some foundation. It is not natural to suppose that truth was made to be the portion of a small number. It was a part, and the best part, of the heritage of humanity; it was not to lie dormant for ages, to awaken at a given moment; nor to lose itself at a distance from the spirit of humanity, to be recovered in the thoughts of some favoured individual. The truth necessary to all was to be within the reach of all, and present itself unceasingly to the mind of all. Such was the condition of truth in the healthy and regular condition of human nature. But those who derive truth from the opinion of the majority, either do not believe that man has departed from that primitive state, or they forget the fact; or finally they believe in the fall, without believing its principal consequences. They do not reflect that one of its first consequences must be the stupefaction of the moral sense, and the obscuration of our natural light. They do not consider that the knowledge which depends upon a certain state of the soul changes with that very state, and that a conscience which has become dormant permits all kinds of error to enter the mind. They do not perceive that our soul is not a mirror, in which truth is reflected by itself, but an opake surface, on which it has always to be graven afresh; that, since the fall, faith is so little independent of the will that, on the contrary, the will is a condition and an element of faith; that truth has no longer an irresistible evidence, nor, consequently, the power of making the same impressions on the minds of all, and subjecting them at once to its sway. On the other hand, they do not see that humanity, having been corrupted at its source, it is with great difficulty that certain elementary principles, necessary to the existence of society, are preserved, and still less, we must acknowledge it, preserved as true as well as necessary. They do not remind themselves of the fact, that certain errors, adapted to all, have been able easily to enter the world by a door so poorly guarded as that of the heart, there to usurp authority, to establish themselves on a respectable footing, to become the rule of conduct and the test of morals. Will they deny that there have been universal errors? What will they say of slavery, that appalling evil for which, during ages, no one had the slightest shame or remorse, which has not retired, except step by step, before the advancing light of Christianity, and which, O mournful condition of human nature! some civilized men, who

believe in Jesus Christ, yet defend? When these errors come to be torn from the human mind, it is from the roots, it is for ever; the conscience of humanity never restores any of its conquests. But such errors have reigned; ages have transmitted them intact and vital; and if universal consent is the seal of truth, they are as irrefragably true, as any of the truths which have universal consent for their basis. Are you surprised at this? Be appalled, but do not be surprised; for if the fall of man has not had these consequences, I am ignorant of what consequences it could have, and should be reduced to the necessity of deeming it a pure fiction, or of all truths the most insignificant and powerless.

Many reason upon this subject as if nothing had happened since the day when God, looking upon his work, saw that what he had made was good. They speak of truth as if its condition amongst us were always the same. They love to represent it, enveloping and accompanying humanity, as the atmosphere envelopes and accompanies our earth in its journey through the heavens. But it is not so; truth is not attached to our mind, as the atmosphere to the globe we inhabit.—Truth is a suppliant, who, standing before the threshold, is for ever pressing towards the hearth, from which sin has banished it. As we pass and re-pass before that door, which it never quits, that majestic and mournful figure fixes for a moment our distracted attention. Each time it awakens in our memory I know not what dim recollections of order, glory, and happiness; but we pass, and the impression vanishes. We have not been able entirely to repudiate the truth; we still retain some unconnected fragments of it; what of its light our enfeebled eye can bear, what of it is proportioned to our condition. The rest we reject or disfigure, so as to render it difficult of recognition, while we retain,—which is one of our misfortunes,—the names of things we no longer possess. Moral and social truth is like one of those monumental inscriptions [1] over which the whole community pass as they go to their business, and which every day become more and more defaced; until some friendly chisel is applied to deepen the lines in that worn-out stone, so that every one is forced to perceive and to read it. That chisel is in the hands of a small number of men, who perseveringly remain prostrate before that

[1] The monumental inscriptions here referred to are supposed to be level with the ground.—T

ancient inscription, at the risk of being dashed upon the pavement, and trampled under the heedless feet of the passers-by ; in other words, this truth dropped into oblivion, that duty fallen into disuse, finds a witness in the person of some man who has not believed, without any other consideration, than that all the world are right, simply and solely, because it is all the world.

The strange things which that strange man says, and which some other repeats after him, will not fail to be believed sooner or later, and finally become the universal opinion. And why ? Because truth is truth ; because it corresponds to every thing, satisfies every thing ; because, both in general and in detail, it is better adapted to us than error ; because, bound up by the most intimate relations, with all the order in the universe, it has in our interests and wants a thousand involuntary advocates ; because every thing demands it, every things cries after it ; because error exhausts and degrades itself ; because falsehood, which at first appeared to benefit all, has ended by injuring all ; so that truth sits down in its place, vacant, as it were, for the want of a suitable heir. Enemies concur with friends, obstacles with means, to the production of that unexpected result. Combinations of which it is impossible to give account, and of which God only has the secret, secure that victory. But conscience is not a stranger here ; for there is within us, whatever we do, a witness to the truth, a witness timid and slow, but which a superior force drags from its retreat, and at last compels to speak. It is thus, that truths, the most combated, and, at first, sustained by organs the most despised, end by becoming, in their turn, popular convictions. This is our hope with reference to that truth which includes all truths, or in the bosom of which they are all formed anew. We firmly believe, conformably to the divine promise, that a time will come when the Gospel of Jesus Christ, if not loved by all, will at least be believed and professed by all.

This, however, does not prevent all such truths from being combated, and their first witnesses from passing for madmen. At the head of each of those movements which have promoted the elevation of the human race, what do you see ? In the estimation of the world, madmen. And the contempt they have attracted by their folly has always been proportioned to the grandeur of their enterprise, and the generosity of their intentions. The true heroes

of humanity have always been crowned by that insulting epithet. And the man who to-day in a pious enthusiasm, or yet more, to please the world, celebrates those men whose glory lies in having dared to displease the world, would, during their life, have perhaps been associated with their persecutors. He honours them, not because they are worthy of honour, but because he sees them honoured. His fathers have killed the prophets, and he their son, subdued by universal admiration, builds the tombs of the prophets.

The world demands,—and it is always by a forgetfulness of the condition into which we are fallen that it does so,—that truth should present itself with the advantage of simplicity and clearness. Many wish to make this a condition of truth; they wish to recognize it by this mark. That is all very well! But in order that it may appear simple, let us first have an eye simple like it. Is it the fault of truth, if, our heart being divided, our intellect should be divided also, and that the axioms of man *innocent* are the problems of man *fallen?* But without insisting on this reply, which may not perhaps be received by those who do not believe in the first fall, let us give another, which may be within the view and reach of all. If we make clearness and simplicity the test of truth, we run the risk, in many cases, of embracing error instead of truth; for error, in most instances, has over the truth the advantage of simplicity. Error, very often, has nothing to do but to suppress one of the elements of a question, to procure for it, by that arbitrary suppression, a similitude of unity. Every truth in the actual condition of human nature, is composed of two terms, which must be harmonized, and which does not become truth in our minds but by their reconciliation.[1] There are always two elements

[1] The reference here is obviously to that principle of the Baconian philosophy, so clearly developed in the Novum Organum, by which all facts and truths are to be investigated, on what Bacon calls their negative and affirmative sides. Things are often not what they seem. All questions have two aspects; and negative instances are uniformly to be reconciled to positive, in order that truth may be evolved and established. Take, for example, the principle or fact of gravitation, by which all bodies tend to their centre, in the inverse ratio of their distance. This is proved by innumerable facts. But many things seem opposed to it, such as the rising of smoke, gases, vapours, and the like. These constitute the negative side of the question, and must be shown to be in harmony with the facts on the affirmative side. The earth revolves round the sun; but the sun appears to revolve round the earth; it seems to rise and set, while the earth appears station-

to be reduced to a single one, either by the conciliation or the suppression of one of them. The first step towards the truth is to recognize the existence of two elements; the second is to re-unite without destroying them. Now, in what position in reference to these are the greater part of sincere and thoughtful men; or, to speak more properly, in what position is humanity? In the first; that is to say, it recognizes this duality. The human mind, in general, is not in that state of simplicity which some would make the characteristic and mark of truth. Who, then, will appropriate to themselves this mark and characteristic? Those, doubtless, who will rid themselves of one of the elements of the question, or one of the parts of the truth, that they may occupy their attention only with one. Hence it is their opinion only which will appear simple; and, in a certain sense, it will be so in reality. And since this simplicity flatters at once the indolence and impatience of the hu-

ary. These facts must be harmonized, by reference to a single principle or class of principles, in which they all unite.

In moral or spiritual truths, the fact under consideration is still more obvious. Is man a spiritual and immortal being? This is generally conceded, and the proof is satisfactory. But many facts seem opposed to it. For man sleeps, he decays, he loses his reason, he dies. This is the negative side of the question, and must be shown to be in harmony with the other, before the truth can be established. God is good and merciful. This is the affirmative side of a most important fact. But many things seem opposed to it, such as the universal ignorance and wretchedness of man, the apparent disorders, in the natural and moral worlds, which are permitted, if not inflicted, by the Divine Being. The two sides of the question, then, must be reconciled, by the intervention of some other principle, or fact, such as the justice of God, the free-agency of man, or the indissoluble connection between sin and misery. This quality of truth, if it may be so called, is, if possible, still more obvious in revelation. It is affirmed, for example, that Jesus Christ is *God*; but he is also spoken of as man, with all the feelings and infirmities of man. He loves, he suffers, he dies. In one case he acts the sovereign, in another the servant. Now he wields the energies of omnipotence. Anon he groans beneath the pressure of calamity. Now he lies in the grave guarded by Roman soldiers, then he breaks the bands of death, and ascends "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Where, then, is the fact, the consideration, or the principle, which must harmonize these two classes of opposing facts, the negative and positive sides of the problem relative to the mystery of Christ? Is it not found in the fact, that Jesus is both God and man, or, as the New Testament expresses it, "God manifest in the flesh"? If this can be shown, then the two terms of the question are reconciled, and the truth in the case is established.—T.

man mind, and since, on the other hand, the mind ever carries within it the sentiment that there is no truth but in unity, man, dazzled with that false and artificial unity, will eagerly abandon himself to opinions which present it to him, and will maintain them until constrained to acknowledge their falseness in their consequences, which violate at once his own nature and the nature of things.

What has given success to the most pernicious errors, whether in matters of religion or of social order? Their great air of simplicity. What has been alleged in their favour? Common sense. The vulgar, the whole world indeed, permits itself to be caught by that bait. But human life obstinately refuses to settle down upon such a basis. Common opinion originates no doctrine with which man can remain satisfied. The ideas to which he is obliged to remount in order to give dignity to his life possess much more the character of paradoxes than of common-sense notions. Doubtless there was a time when man obtained them by immediate intuition, and not through the intervention of reflection; because such ideas were not distinguished from his very existence.[1] But that time is no more; the pure light is broken in the prison of sin; the power of collecting the scattered rays is not within us; and common sense has not filled the place of intuition. If man yet accomplishes great and sublime things in the world, it is not under the inspiration of common opinion, but under some glimmering of primitive light; nor is it to common opinion they are ascribed, for it is in its name they are condemned. In the eyes of the mass, self-denial, humility, and martyrdom are not common sense.

Thus have I called attention to a fact, and given an explanation of it. It is that a general contempt has often covered those who have recalled to the notice of men some principle of eternal rectitude, some truth essential to the elevation of human nature; and the explanation I have given of it is, the fall. Let us, if you please, for the present, leave the explanation, and confine ourselves to the fact. We ask only that it be affirmed or denied. But we can scarcely believe that any one will deny it. For, that certain individual opinions, which have subsequently become universal, have caused their first partizans to be treated as madmen or cri-

[1] They formed a part of himself. He acted upon them naturally and spontaneously. His mind was clear, and his heart innocent.—T.

minals, who would wish to dispute? And yet to maintain that those opinions, now become universal, were, after all, errors, would argue a disposition of mind, and even a state of moral feeling, which we are not permitted to anticipate. I remind you only that torture, slavery, the degradation of the female sex, and compulsion in matters of religion, have existed amongst us as truths of public recognition, and almost as articles of faith; and that there is a country where the man who should wish to prevent widows from burning themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands would be considered a madman or an infidel. Suppose, then, that the fact in question is admitted by all our readers; let us occupy ourselves only with appreciating its nature.

If the defenders of the most necessary, and, in the present day, the most evident truths, have, in all epochs and in all countries, gone by the name of fools; if they have been hated, despised, and persecuted; if the truth of which they were the messengers has not penetrated, except slowly and by a sanguinary road, into common opinion, laws, and manners; if it had to submit to that exile of ages, in order to reach, as we have said, from the threshold to the hearth, what, we ask, is the condition of truth on the earth, and the position of man with reference to it? We say nothing of the fall; let us admit that man has not fallen; let us not ask what he might have been formerly; let us look only at what he is at present, that is, since the remotest era to which we can go back by the aid of historical monuments. What is the disposition of a being respecting the truth who at first rejects it; who despises those who proclaim it; who, when he accepts it, submits to it rather than accepts it; who receives it only by little and little, and in a shattered and fragmentary state; who finally attaches himself to it, I acknowledge, and does not abandon it, but, like a husband, who, during long years, has shown himself stupidly insensible to the virtues of his wife, and finally yields only to the inconceivable obstinacy of a patience and an affection almost superhuman.

That effort, that sanguinary struggle, with which humanity, wrestling, so to speak, against himself, seizes, one by one, the most necessary truths; the bad grace with which it is done, and the incapacity of not doing otherwise, indicate two things at once; the first, that man cannot do without the truth; the second, that he is not in fellowship with the truth. But truth is one; and all

those truths successively discovered are only parts or diverse applications of it. All the truths which are sometimes called principles are the consequence of a first principle. That principle includes all, unites all; it is from this source they derive their evidence, their life, their immortality. That principle is the first truth which must be honoured, the first light that must be kindled. It will itself kindle all extinguished truths, shed over them an equal radiance, and nourish all their scattered lamps with a divine oil, the source of which is inexhaustible, because it is divine. We must have a key to all problems, a primary idea, by means of which all else may be known; truth is one, because man is one; it is one, or it is nothing.

We here say nothing new. This is the very idea which the human mind has best preserved of its ancient heritage. It has always endeavoured to attach all its thoughts, all its life, to one grand and unique principle. This effort has given birth to all religions; for that primary principle could be nothing but God; and the great question at issue has been to form an idea of God. But man has never failed to make God after his own image, and his various religions have never surpassed himself; for if by these he imposes on himself acts and privations which he would not otherwise impose, these toils, which are of his own choice, do not raise him above himself. Hence these religions do not change the principle of his inner life; they subject him to an external sway, only to leave him free at heart; in a word, they do not substitute the new man for the old. And since they take man at a given point in space and duration, they are necessarily temporary, and retire before a new degree of culture, and a new form of civilization. But at their first appearance, however absurd they may be, they are by no means taxed with folly; because they are only a form given to the moral conditions of all,—a form which is itself the result of time, place, and traditions; it is born and grows up with the people; it is itself as appropriate and natural as their manners; and they will take care not to accuse of extravagance their own work, and their own thought.

But let a doctrine present itself, which, so far from being formed in the image of man as he is, appears, on the contrary, formed in the image of man as he is not; a doctrine which compels man to surpass himself, and which changes the character, not of a parti-

cular class, or of a single energy or faculty, but of the entire human life; a doctrine which places the object of humanity higher than it is placed by any individual, or by mankind generally, how, think you, will it be received? What! the particular applications of the principle have cost those who proposed it contempt and insult, while the very principle of all these applications, that which included them all, and discovers many others like them, does not bring upon its defenders insult and contempt! What! hate the consequences, and yet not hate the principle which sanctions them, enforces them, and will continually give rise to others of a similar kind! We do not think so. That principle will not escape hatred, unless by contempt, or rather, it will suffer both by turns; the hatred of those who cannot help suspecting its truth; the contempt of others, who, looking on it only as a prejudice different from their own, will not believe it formidable enough to deserve their hatred. Let us rather say, that both of them will be forced to regard it as a folly. For what is that principle, which has created, so to speak, another human nature. It cannot be an abstraction; it must be a fact. It must be a fact of a new order, because ordinary facts would leave us in our ordinary condition. It is, then, a divine fact; for to God only does it belong to create a fact of a new order. Hence it is a fact which we could not foresee. And since we could not foresee it, we cannot comprehend it. It is not a natural but a supernatural fact; it is a miracle; it is a folly. Indeed, it is not a religion such as that which man makes for himself. True religion is a revelation of God; and if God has spoken, what he has said is necessarily a folly to those who do not believe. Those, too, who convey this revelation, or relate this fact, or announce this message, will excite in the world an immense surprise; will revolt the wise, alarm the timid, irritate the powerful. They will see let loose against them the ignorant as well as the wise; for it is not necessary to be learned in order to discern folly. As to the effects which this fact has produced upon them, and the internal revolution they have undergone, if they speak of them, they will not be believed; their most certain experiences will appear but as vain fancies. And since the world do not comprehend their principles, neither will they comprehend their conduct; they will complain of them as enthusiasts; they will ridicule them as mystics, until that power of truth, of which we have spoken, has

acted upon the most rebellious spirits, subdued contempt, and finally forced the wisest to confess and to bless that folly.

The history I have thus recounted is that of the Gospel. Christian truth, simply because it was the truth, must at its first appearance have had all the world against it. It has become, externally, the religion of nations; and governments have done themselves the honour to protect it, or to be protected by it. It would indeed be difficult to say with precision what the nations have adopted under the name of the Christian religion. They never believe with the same faith as individuals. A nation has its manner of being Christian, just as an individual has his. One must be a Christian according to the standard of the world, not to be a fool in its judgment. The world has abstracted from Christianity a part of its folly; it has rendered it almost wise, at least, in practice; so that, even in the midst of a Christian nation, the Christian who accepts all that folly passes for a foolish man. It is not, then, necessary to go amongst the Mussulmans, or the followers of Budh, to hear ourselves denominated insane on account of Christianity; the occasion will never be wanting in Christendom, and even in the bosom of a people the most attached to the worship of their fathers. The folly of the cross will always spring from the book of the Gospel: it will always break out in the profession and conduct of those who have accepted it earnestly and without restriction. The Christian, consequently, will always be tempted to dissemble his faith; and it will therefore ever be one of his duties to brave popular contempt, and confess himself tainted with that sublime folly.

But if any one supposes that the whole matter at issue turns on confessing his faith in Christ once for all, he is greatly mistaken. Christianity is something more than an assemblage of dogmas; it is especially the principle of a new life. The folly of the Christian does not always consist in the doctrines he adopts. It consists more, much more, in the maxims which serve to regulate his conduct. He is foolish in practice as well as in theory. He separates himself from other men in a thousand ways, the greater part of which, I allow, are not visible, but remain secret between himself and God. But it is impossible that this separation should not sometimes be obvious and public; if he does not seek occasions for it, it is certain he will not avoid them. The same Christianity

which teaches him maxims inconceivable to the rest of the world, teaches him to follow them without fear and dissimulation. Such courage is the first law and the first mark of a true Christian. Every Christian is, first of all, a witness; every witness is, by anticipation, a martyr.

Christianity has effected this revolution in the world. It has given to truth a dignity independent of time and numbers. It has required that truth should be believed and respected for itself. It has claimed that every one should be able to judge of its merits; that the most ignorant and the most isolated should find in himself sufficient reasons to believe; that in order to decide regarding it, he should not enquire if others around him believe it, but that he should be ready, when occasion requires, to be alone in his opinion, and to persist in it. So many men make no use of their conscience; so many who practise a duty would not even suspect that it was a duty, if they found that opinion prevalent; so many who have no doubt respecting a duty, do not expect to recognize and discharge it until they see it performed by those of their fellow-men in whom they have the greatest confidence! They believe so much in man, so much in numbers, so much in antiquity, and so little in truth! But Christianity was designed to produce a race of men who should believe in truth, not in numbers nor in years, nor in force,—men, consequently, who should be ready to pass for fools. * * * * * * * *

O, then, let us daily ask God to form around us an immense void, in which we shall see nothing but him,—a profound silence, in which we shall hear nothing but him! Let us beseech him to raise our souls to an elevation where fear of the judgments of the world shall not reach us; where the world itself shall disappear and sink away beneath! Let us entreat him to envelope us in his radiance and inspire us with the holy folly of his gospel, and especially to penetrate our souls with a love "to Him that hath loved us," so intense and dominant that it would cost us more to descend from that height to the world than it has cost us to ascend thither from the world. Let us not only pray without ceasing, but let us unceasingly watch, unceasingly strive; no means, no effort is too much to disengage us from the restraints of worldly wisdom, to make us die to that vain wisdom, and enable us to taste, in the bosom of God, the plenitude of truth and the plenitude of life.

V.

THE GENIUS OF THE GOSPEL.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people."—Rev., xiv, 6.

AMONG sceptics who resist, with the greatest pertinacity, the arguments of the defenders of Christianity, there are none, doubtless, who would not be ready to declare that a sensible proof, an authentic miracle, would not find them incorrigible. Show us, they will say to you, what St. John is said to have seen, "an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people," and we shall be converted. This is to promise what is beyond their power; miracles do not convert; the sight of them can only convince the understanding; the heart needs that demonstration of power which belongs only to the Spirit of God. But if miracles, clear and well attested, are capable of producing on the mind an impression which predisposes it to receive the message of salvation, let sceptics cease to demand the vision of St. John; they have something of still greater value; that vision is an image of which they have the reality. They can, as well as St. John, and in some sense better than he, see that angel who bears through the heavens the everlasting gospel to those that dwell on the earth. I mean that they can discover in Christianity a character of perpetuity and universality, as striking at least to the reason as the sight of an angel flying in the expanse of heaven would be to the eyes and the imagination. If they require a miracle here is one. For to what will they give the name of a miracle, if they refuse it to a fact unique in its kind, inconconceivable in its production, contrary to all probabilities, inaccessible to all induction, and which before seeing it realized, every one would have judged impossible? Let them lend us such attention

as the subject demands, and we shall hope that the facts we are about to present will make such an impression on them as will induce them to extend their investigations, and inform themselves more thoroughly respecting the Gospel.

This is the question we propose for discussion. Is it in the nature of things that a doctrine, the principal ideas of which are not susceptible of being proved, still less discovered by mere reason, should live in all times, and be introduced among all nations; and not only so, but should become, in all times and in all nations, the vivifying principle of morality, and the beneficent auxiliary of the progress of the human mind?

Have the goodness to reply; but recollect, that the examples you shall cite must want none of the conditions enumerated in my questions. The doctrine under consideration is one which can neither be demonstrated nor discovered by reason. It is one capable of embracing all times and all nations. It is one which takes the principal direction of the conduct of those who embrace it. It is one favourable to the progress of the human mind and the onward march of civilization;—four conditions, each of which is essential.

I see, indeed, a doctrine common to all times and all nations, that of the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul; two inseparable truths, the union of which forms what is called *natural religion*. It is natural, in fact, because nature appears every where to have taught its elements to the human soul. It is every where one of the first products of reason, one of the first results of its intellectual activity. It is the conclusion of a reasoning so simple and so rapid that the reasoning, so to speak, disappears, and the soul appears to obtain it by intuition. It is universal, if you please, because it is natural. It is not, however, a natural but a positive religion, in which we demand this character of universality.[1] As soon as natural religion professes to clothe itself in determined forms, unanimity ceases, no human power can establish it. Natural religion, the instant it becomes positive, ceases to be capable of being the religion of the human race.[2]

[1] By a positive religion the author means one which is clothed in set forms, which consists of specific articles,—or what, in theological phrase, is sometimes called *dogmatic*.—T.

[2] When Robespierre, who, with all his enormities, had some political sagacity, saw the havoc which atheism was working in France, he induced the Convention, which had abolished all forms of religion, to restore the

But it will be said, if a positive religion cannot be universal, at least it may regain on the side of time what it loses on the side of space. Suppose this granted; but it must be acknowledged, that it is only half of the condition we have proposed. We have not spoken of all times only, but of all places; so that after we have been shown a positive religion, mistress of a corner of the globe, from the origin of the world till now, we should have a right to reject such an example. We accept it, nevertheless, by way of accommodation, and for want of a better. There are religious doctrines of an amazing antiquity. With some variations in the details, the elementary principles are permanent, and these appear unchangeable, as the physical constitution of the nation that professes them, immovable as the soil that bears them. If they are destitute of universality, perpetuity ought, in a certain sense, to be accorded to them. But are they competent, as I have required, to serve as a moral force; and are they favourable to the natural and progressive development of the human race? No; some of them have no harmony with life; others pervert the heart, and the social relations; and all of them chain the mind in immovable forms. All present the phenomenon of a people who, surprised, as one might believe, by a sudden congelation, preserve, in the most advanced periods of their existence, the attitude, manners, opinions, costume, institutions, language, in a word, the whole manner of life, in the midst of which they were seized by that sudden catalepsy. If, on the other hand, any one claims that it is the spirit of the people that has determined their faith, and that their manners have made their religion, then this religion is not such as we have

doctrines of the existence of a Supreme Being, and of the immortality of the soul. The reign of absolute infidelity, and the worship of reason, in the person of a beautiful but lewd woman, brought from one of the brothels of Paris, was of short duration. But deism, in a positive form, could not be established by all the efforts of the government backed by the philosophers. The theophilanthropists, as they called themselves, aided by the public funds, opened some fifteen or twenty churches, delivered orations, and sang hymns, in honour of the Deity and the immortality of the soul, but the attendance became less and less, and the interest, even of those who were most enthusiastic in the project, gradually declined. So that, by the end of 1795, scarcely a vestige of an organized system of religious belief and worship remained in France. The whole scheme was abandoned as hopeless. No! Deism cannot be established as a positive religion. It fails to meet the wants of the human soul; it gives no assurance of the divine favour, and supplies no pledge of a blessed immortality.—T.

required, namely, a doctrine capable of influencing the life, and determining the conduct.

In going over the different known religions which divide the nations, we shall find none that meets all the conditions we have laid down. Mohammedism, besides owing its progress to the power of the sword, fails to favour the progressive advancement of the human mind, nay more, represses it. It is not suited to penetrate into all countries; because it necessarily carries along with it polygamy and despotism, antagonisms of civilization. The religion of Hindostan fails to be moral, and is unfavourable to culture and liberty; every where it would need its own earth and sky, for which alone it is made. Universality is equally wanting to the Jewish religion, for it does not desire it, nay more, repels it. It is a religion entirely national and local; beyond Palestine it is exiled. The deficiency which exists in all the religions we have just named exists also in all others. They want universality, perpetuity, morality, and sympathy with progress.

Such already is the answer to the question we have proposed; for no positive religion is found which has united all the conditions enumerated. We may say, with some degree of confidence, that such a thing is not possible. If it were, would it not have happened? And if it has not happened, will it ever happen?

But even in consulting the nature of things, independent of the teachings of history, the same answer will be obtained. No man can give a religion to humanity. If natural religion be referred to, it is nature that gives it; and all that a man can do is to give form to its dogmas, by reducing its teachings to order; he can only restore to humanity what he has received from it. But, is it a positive religion which is referred to; one, I mean, the dogmas of which human reason could not, of itself, have discovered? Then, I ask, what elevation of heart, of imagination, of reason, what stretch of genius, what wondrous divination, are supposed to belong to a man, to admit that the dogmas of his invention, the dogmas which nature has not given, shall be received in all countries, shall preserve their adaptation in all times, shall be applicable to all the conditions of humanity and of society, in a word, shall be able to constitute and shall actually constitute the religion of the human race?

It is with some degree of inconsiderateness that some men are

spoken of as advancing beyond their age, and impressing their own individual character upon generations. These are, most of the time, men who have better than others understood, reduced into forms more precise, and expressed with greater energy, the dominant opinions of their era. They have proved what their age carried in its bosom. They have concentrated, in the burning-glass of their genius, the rays of truth, which, scattered in the world, have not yet been able to set it on fire. But their genius, the faithful and powerful expression of a time and a country, which have made them what they are, cannot be as vast as the genius of humanity. Men have done the work of men, partial, relative, limited. But let an individual, isolating himself from his country, from his time, nay more, from his individuality, divine the fact, the idea, the doctrine which shall renew, convert, and vivify mankind in all times and in all places,—such an one is not a man, he is a God!

Observe particularly that I do not require that his religion shall become in fact the religion of all times, of all places, and of all men. In the first instance, he must have time to establish it; and we do not claim that at the beginning of its career it shall conquer the whole world. Further, we have not all time before us; and in as much as the future fate of the world cannot be fully ascertained, we are not able to say with precision that a thing is of all time. Finally, all true religion supposes freedom, and freedom supposes the possibility of resistance on the part of individuals. We shall demand only, and the matter must be thoroughly understood, that a sufficient number of experiments have proved that the doctrine in question is such that no climate, no degree of culture, no form of politics, no circumstances of time or place, no physical or moral constitution, a barrier to it, are a fatal limit which it cannot pass; or to express ourselves more briefly, that it correspond to the universal and permanent wants of humanity, independent of all accidental, temporary, and local circumstances.

If there is a religion of God upon the earth, it ought to have this character of universality and perpetuity. For who can doubt that the love of God embraces all mankind; or suppose that he could not speak to all mankind? In such a case, God cannot have in view one time, one country, one people only, but all who possess the heart of humanity. When he speaks, it is for the whole hu-

man race. Should it please him to distinguish one nation among the nations of the earth, it would yet be for the sake of the human family. What he might say to that people in particular would not have an infinite and eternal range; that alone would be invested with such a character, which, through that separate nation, would be addressed to universal humanity. His revelation would not constitute the fleeting existence of one nation, except, by this means, to form a people taken out of all the nations of the earth, a spiritual people, a nation of holy souls.

We return, then, to the proposition, and say: If such a religion exists, it must be from God. It is on this ground, that is to say, its universality, that we have already acknowledged natural religion to be from him. But if, besides natural religion, there is in the world a positive religion, invested with the character we have in view, we maintain that it also is from God. Because it belongs to God alone to form an adequate conception of man, whom he has made, and meet the wants of his entire nature; because, in consequence of this, God only knows how to speak to man; because he is confined to no places, and restricted by no circumstances. And if the arbitrary appearance of the principle of a positive religion arrests our attention, let us reflect that what is necessary for God, and a consequence of his nature, may very well appear arbitrary to us; and that what is strange and unexpected in his revelations is not less the necessary and indispensable result of his perfections, the faithful and spontaneous imprint of his character and relations to the world.

Let us, then, hold for certain, that if there is in the world a positive religion, which, fitted to control the life, and favourable to the progressive advancement of the human mind, finds no limits in any circumstance of time and place, such a religion is from God.

This being settled, let us enquire if there is such a religion.

A little more than eighteen hundred years ago, a man appeared in an obscure corner of the world. I do not say that a long succession of predictions had announced the advent of this man; that a long train of miracles had marked, with a divine seal, the nation from which he was to spring, and the word itself which announced him; that from the heights of a far distant future he had projected his shadow to the feet of our first parents exiled from Paradise;

in a word, that he was encircled and authenticated by an imposing array of proofs. I only say that he preached a religion; it is not natural religion;—the doctrines of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are every where taken for granted in his words, but never proved. They do not consist of ideas deduced from the primitive concessions of reason. What he teaches, what forms the foundation and essence of his system, are things which confound reason; things to which reason can find no access. It proclaims a God upon earth, a God-man, a God poor, a God crucified. It proclaims vengeance overwhelming the innocent, pardon raising the guilty from the deepest condemnation, God himself the victim of man, and man forming one and the same person with God. It proclaims a new birth, without which man cannot be saved. It proclaims the sovereignty of the grace of God, and the entire freedom of man.[1]

I do not soften its teachings. I present them in their naked form. I seek not to justify them. No,—you can, if you will, be astonished and alarmed at these strange dogmas;—do not spare yourselves in this particular. But when you have wondered sufficiently at their strangeness, I shall present another thing for your

[1] When our author speaks of God as a victim, and subjected to suffering, he must always be understood as referring to God manifest in the flesh, that is, to Jesus Christ in his whole nature as human and divine. Some, I know, object to such expressions as those in the text, as being unphilosophical and unscriptural. But in this they may be mistaken. Our philosophy of the divine nature is exceedingly shallow and imperfect. God is not the cold and impassive Being which it too often represents him. Perfect and ever blessed he certainly is; but that he is incapable of every thing like sentiment or emotion is exceedingly questionable. Such is not the view given of him in the Scriptures. Are we not expressly informed that the Word was made flesh, that he might suffer death for every man, and that it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren? If he suffered at all did not his whole being suffer? Was there not a profound and mysterious sympathy between his human and his divine natures? How else can we account for the infinite value and efficacy attached to his sufferings and death? How else explain the adoring reverence of the primitive church in view of his agony in the garden and on the cross? Besides, suffering is by no means an evidence of imperfection; nay, the experience of it may be necessary to the highest felicity, on the part even of pure and perfect natures. In this respect, the sinless and adorable Saviour was made perfect through sufferings, as much, perhaps, for his own sake as for ours. But this is a subject which philosophy does not understand; and we can only say devoutly, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh!"—T.

astonishment. These strange doctrines have conquered the world. Scarcely made known in poor Judea, they took possession of learned Athens, gorgeous Corinth, and proud Rome. They found confessors in shops, in prisons, and in schools, on tribunals and on thrones. Vanquishers of civilization, they triumphed over barbarism. They caused to pass under the same yoke the degraded Roman and the savage Scandinavian. The forms of social life have changed,—society has been dissolved and renewed,—these have endured. Nay more, the church which professed them has endeavoured to diminish their power, by beginning to corrupt their purity. Mistress of traditions and depository of knowledge, she has used her advantages against the doctrines she ought to have defended; but they have endured. Every where, and at all times, in cottages and in palaces, have they found souls to whom a Redeemer was precious and regeneration necessary. Moreover, no other system, philosophical or religious, has endured. Each made its own era, and each era had its own idea; and, as a celebrated writer has developed it, the religious sentiment, left to itself, selected forms adapted to the time, which it broke to pieces when that time had passed away. But the doctrine of the cross continued to re-appear. If it had been embraced only by one class of persons, that even were much, that perhaps were inexplicable; but you find the followers of the cross among soldiers and citizens, among the rich and the poor, the bold and the timid, the wise and the ignorant. This doctrine is adapted to all, every where, and in all times. It never grows old. Those who embrace it never find themselves behind their age; they understand it, they are understood by it; they advance with it, and aid its progress. The religion of the cross appears no where disproportionate to civilization. On the contrary, civilization advances in vain; it always finds Christianity before it.

Do not suppose that Christianity, in order to place itself in harmony with the age, will complacently leave out a single idea. It is from its inflexibility that it is strong; it has no need to give up anything in order to be in harmony with whatever is beautiful, legitimate, and true; for Christianity is itself the type of perfection. It is the same to-day as in the time of the Reformers, in the time of the fathers of the church, in the time of the apostles and of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is not a religion which flatters the

natural man; and worldlings, in keeping at a distance from it, furnish sufficient evidence that Christianity is a system foreign to their natures. Those who dare not reject it are forced to soften it down. They divest it of its barbarisms, its *myths*, as they are pleased to call them; they render it even reasonable,—but, strange to say, when it is reasonable, it has no power; and in this, is like one of the most wonderful creatures in the animal world, which, when it loses its sting, dies. Zeal, favour, holiness, and love disappear with these strange doctrines; the salt has lost its savour, and none can tell how to restore it. But, on the other hand, do you not, in general, perceive that when there is a revival of these doctrines Christianity is inspired with new life, faith is re-animated, and zeal abounds? Do not ask, Upon what soil, or in what system, must grow these precious plants? You can reply in advance, that it is only in the rude and rough soil of orthodoxy, under the shadow of those which confound human reason, and from which it loves to remove as far as possible.

This, then, among all the religions, is the only one which is eternally young. But perhaps physical nature will do what moral nature cannot. Perhaps climates will arrest that angel which carries the everlasting gospel through the heavens. Perhaps a certain corporeal organization may be necessary for the reception of the truth. But you may pass with it from Europe to Africa, from Ethiopia to Greenland, from the Atlantic to the Southern sea. Every where will this message be heard; every where fill an acknowledged void; every where perfect and renew the life. The soul of the negro slave receives from it the same impressions as the soul of Isaac Newton. The lofty intelligence of the one and the stupidity of the other have at least one great thought in common. And let it be well remarked, the effects are every where the same. The cross sheds a light that illumines all. As if by instinct, not by painful reasoning, they reach every where the same conclusions, recognize the same duties, and, in different forms, commence the same life. Wherever Christianity is introduced, civilized man draws nearer to nature, while the savage rises towards civilization; each in his turn, and an inverse sense, makes some steps towards a common centre, which is that of true sociability and true civilization.

It will, perhaps, be objected, that this civilizing power of Chris-

tianity is found only in the sublime morality of the Gospel; and that is not by the positive doctrines, but rather in spite of them, that savages are converted, and then civilized. This assertion is false in whatever aspect it may be viewed.

In readily conceding to the evangelical morality a decided superiority to all other systems of morals, we wish it to be observed, that this superiority holds less with reference to the precepts than their basis or motives; in other words, the mysterious and divine facts which distinguish Christianity as a positive religion. The Gospel has not invented morality; many of its finest maxims were, for a long time previous, in circulation in the world. The Gospel has not so much promulged them as placed them on a new foundation, and quickened them by a new spirit. The glory of the Gospel consists less in announcing a new morality than in giving power to practise the old.

But let us not dispute. We admit that the morality of the Gospel contains many things absolutely new; but it must be conceded that there was in the world, and particularly in the writings of the ancient sages, as fine a morality; and that, if morality has a power within itself, an intrinsic virtue, we should expect to see practice in some proportion to theory. But in former times, now, and always, in each man, and in humanity generally, we are struck with a singular disparity between principles and conduct; and are constrained to acknowledge, that in this sphere, at least, what is done responds poorly to what is known; and that the life by no means harmonizes with convictions. The knowledge of morality is not morality; and the science of duty is not the practice of duty.

These general remarks are fully confirmed by the history of the evangelization of the heathen. If one fact is known and acknowledged, it is that it has never been by the preaching of morality,—not even of evangelical morality,—that their hearts have been gained. Nay, it is not more so by the teaching of natural religion. Pious Christians, deceiving themselves on this point, wished to conduct the people of Greenland methodically by natural to revealed religion. As long as they rested in these first elements their preaching did not affect, did not gain a single soul; but the moment that, casting away their human method, they decided to follow that of Christ and of God, the barriers fell before them, and once more the folly of the cross was found to be wiser than the

wisdom of man. The schools teach us to proceed from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the composite; but in the kingdom of God things occur which derange all our ideas. There we must begin at once with the unknown, the composite, the extraordinary. It is from revealed religion that man ascends to natural religion. He is transported at a single bound into the centre of mysteries. He is shown God-man, God crucified, before he is shown God in glory. He is shown the mass before the details, the end before the beginning. Do you wish to know why? It is that the true road to knowledge in religion is not from God to man, but from man to God; that before knowing himself he cannot know God; that the view of his misery and of his sins conducts him to the atonement, and the atonement reveals to him, in their fulness, the perfections of his Creator. It is, to repeat the celebrated saying of Augustine, that "man must descend into the hell of his own heart before he can ascend to the heaven of God." The Christian religion is not merely the knowledge of God, but the knowledge of the relations of man with God. It is the view of these relations which sheds the most light upon the character and attributes of God himself. And hence it is quite correct to say that revealed religion, which is precisely the discovery of these relations, conducts to natural religion, namely, to that which is more elementary, to the idea of the infinite, whence natural religion is derived, to religious feeling and the conceptions which are called natural, but which ought to be called supernatural. These are ordinarily but little familiar, seldom present, and not altogether natural to our minds. In fact, how many men has the Gospel taken from the depths of materialism, and conducted, by the way of Christian doctrine, to a belief in the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul.[1]

[1] The following, taken from the Biblical Repository, Vol. 1, second series, p. 383, is a striking illustration of what our author asserts:—

"Francis Junius, whom, at his death, it was remarked by Scaliger, the whole world lamented as its instructor, was recovered from atheism, in a remarkable manner, by simply perusing St. John, i, 1–5. Persuaded by his father to read the New Testament, 'At first sight,' he says, 'I fell unexpectedly on that august chapter of St. John the evangelist, "In the beginning was the Word," etc. I read part of the chapter, and was so struck with what I read that I instantly perceived the divinity of the subject, and the authority and majesty of the Scripture to surpass greatly all human eloquence. I shuddered in my body, my mind was confounded, and I was

It is, then, the doctrines, the mysteries, the paradoxes of the Gospel, we must carry to the savage, if we would gain his heart to natural religion, from which he is estranged, and to pure morality, of which he knows still less. But even if our adversaries could reverse all this, they would not the less remain under the pressure of an overwhelming difficulty. If natural religion and morality suffice to make converts, will they not suffice also to make preachers? Find us, among those who do not believe in the positive doctrines of Christianity, men disposed to undertake that laborious and dangerous mission. Come, let the philosophers and rationalists bestir themselves; let us see their faith by their works; let their zeal serve to prove, to corroborate their system; let them, from love of morality and natural religion, quit parents, friends, fortune, habits, plunge into ancient forests, traverse burning plains of sand, brave the influences of a deadly climate, in order to reach, convert, and save some souls! Might they not do for the kingdom of God half of what so many courageous travellers have done and suffered for science, or the temporal prosperity of their country? What! no one, sir! no one even feel! This appeal has not moved a single soul of those friends of religion and morality, for whom the Cross is folly! Why, it would appear that they had no love for God, no care for souls, none of the pious proselytism found among the partizans of the strange doctrines of the fall of man, a bloody expiation, and a new birth! My brethren, does this evidence satisfy you, and do you believe that there can be any other means than by these doctrines, of establishing the kingdom of God on the earth? Thus Christianity is clearly the positive religion, which combines all the conditions enumerated in our question.

These are not arguments we present to the adversaries of Christianity; they are facts. They have only to recognize this striking characteristic of Christianity, to see, with us, that angel who flies through the heavens, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all that dwell upon the earth, and to every tribe and tongue and people. These are facts which we claim to offer them. If they are false let them be proved so. If they are true let any one dispute

so strongly affected all that day, that I hardly knew who I myself was; but thou, Lord my God, didst remember me in thy boundless mercy, and receive me, a lost sheep, into thy fold.'"

the conclusion, if he can. Let him explain by natural causes, a phenomenon unique in its kind. Let him assign, if he can, a limit to that power, that influence of Christianity. But will any one give himself the trouble of doing this? In truth, it is more easy to shut the eyes, and, repeating with confidence some hearsays, to assure us that, according to the best information, Christianity has gone by; that it has had its era to make, and has made it,—its part to play, and has played it; and that "the only homage we can render it now is to throw flowers upon its tomb." This tomb would be that of the human race. Christianity yet preserves the world from the wrath of God. It is, perhaps, with a view to its propagation, that events are pressing onward, and that nations are agitated with a fearful crisis. Shall a few sceptics, with frivolous hearts, give the lie to the most high God, and the immense pressure of circumstances prove a false standard of providence? Let us pray for the progress of the everlasting gospel, and the conversion of those proud spirits who till now have disdained to recognize it. Let us pray that it may constantly become more precious to ourselves, and that its laws may be as sacred as its promises are sweet.

VI.

NATURAL FAITH.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—JOHN, xx, 29.

THE apostles did not profess to convey to the world any thing but a message, good news, the news of that fact which the angels announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem, in these words: "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good-will to men!" Faithful but not indifferent messengers, deeply moved themselves by the good news they carried to the world, they spoke of it with all the warmth of joy and love. Preachers of righteousness, they urged with force the practical consequences of the facts they announced, and in their admirable instructions, a leading sentiment, gratitude, was expanded into a multitude of duties and virtues, the combination of which forms the purest morality. But at this point their ministry terminated; and certainly they made no pretension of introducing a new philosophy into the world. Nevertheless they have done so, and those who, in modern times, devote themselves to ascertain what ideas are concealed under the great facts of the gospel, to penetrate into its spirit, and, if we may so express ourselves, construct the system of it, cannot refrain from admiration, while reflecting on the connection of parts of that great whole, their perfect harmony with one another, and the harmony of each, with the permanent characteristics and inextinguishable wants of human nature. This philosophical character of the Gospel would have been striking, even if the apostles had appeared to impress it voluntarily upon their instructions; but how much more is this the case, and how well fitted to make us perceive the divinity of the Gospel, when we see that its writers had no consciousness of the fact, and that it was quite in spite of themselves, so to speak, that it was stamped upon their work! This philosophical character would be striking even in simple religion,

one apparently rational, approaching, in a word, to natural religion, as much as a positive one can; but how much more striking it is, when we consider that this religion is a complete tissue of strange doctrines, the first view of which appals the reason. If these doctrines, so arbitrary in appearance, involve ideas eminently natural, and a system perfectly consistent, who will not be struck with it; and who will not wish to ascertain by what secret reason the most sublime springs from the folly of the cross, philosophy from dogma, and light from mystery?

No where, as it appears to us, is this philosophical character of Christianity so vividly impressed as on the doctrine of the Gospel concerning faith. Not only is the general necessity of faith recognized, as in all religions; but this principle holds a place in it, enjoys an importance, and exhibits effects which prove that the Gospel alone has seized the principle in all its force, and applied it in all its extent; in a word, that it alone has thoroughly discovered and fully satisfied the wants of human nature. The following proposition, then, will form a subject worthy of our attention. The religions of man and the religion of Jesus Christ are, with reference to the principle of faith, philosophically true, with this exception, that in the first there is only a feeble and unprofitable beginning of truth, and in the second, the religion of Jesus Christ, it is found in all its plenitude and in all its power. To prove this proposition, we propose to develope, in its various applications, the language of our Saviour: "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed."

I remark, first, that human religions have rendered homage to philosophical truth, in placing faith at their foundation; or rather, that they are themselves a homage to that truth, inasmuch as, by their existence alone, they have proclaimed the necessity and dignity of faith. This is the first idea we have to develope.

The necessity and dignity of faith;—nothing can be more philosophical, nothing more reasonable than this idea. And yet, if we are to believe vulgar declamation, and the sayings of people of the world, faith can be the portion only of weak minds and diseased imaginations. On the contrary, it is in a certain degree the common heritage of the human race; and in the highest degree the peculiar gift of elevated characters, of noble spirits, and the source of whatever in the world bears the impress of greatness.

The entire life of man, considered in its essence, is composed of three things—thought, feeling, action. Feeling is the motive of action; knowledge is the point of departure for both, and therefore is the basis of life. From this every thing proceeds, to this every thing returns. Before all, it is necessary to know; but the first glance enables us to see how little proportion there is between the means of knowledge and the multiplicity of its objects. It is impossible, indeed, that we should see every thing, and have experience in all the cases in which knowledge is desirable. A vast chasm, then, very frequently extends between knowledge and action; over that abyss a bridge is thrown by faith, which, resting on a given fact, upon a primary motion, extends itself over the void, and conveys us to the other side. Some kind of experience, physical or moral, a view external, or internal, of observation or intuition, is the point of departure, or the reason of faith. This first fact itself neither demands nor requires faith; but its consequences, its logical deductions, are not embodied, do not become a reality for man but by means of faith, which presents them to his mind, and constructs for him a world beyond that which personal experience has revealed.

We are accustomed to oppose reason and faith to each other; we ought rather to say that the one perfects the other, and that they are two pillars, one of which could not without the other sustain life. Man is pitied because he cannot know every thing, or rather because he cannot see every thing, and that he is thence compelled to believe. But this is to complain of one of his privileges. Direct knowledge does not call into requisition the living forces of the soul; it is a passive state, honoured by no spontaneity. But in the act of faith (for it is an act, and not a state,) the soul is in some sort creative; if it does not create the truth, it draws it from itself, appropriates, realizes it. Under its influence an idea becomes a fact, a fact for ever present. Thought, supported by a power of the soul, then manifests all its dignity in revealing its true independence; man multiplies his life, extends his universe, and attains the perfect stature of a thinking being. His dignity is derived from believing, not from knowing.

Faith is invested with a character still more elevated, when it takes its point of departure from the word of a witness, whose soul ours has penetrated, and recognized its authority. Then, under

a new name, that of confidence, it attaches itself to the noblest elements of our nature, sympathy, gratitude, and love; it is the condition of the social relations, and constitutes their true beauty. Far from contradicting reason, it is the fact of a sublime reason, and one might say that it is to the soul what genius is to the intellect. When the apostles recognized, by his words, their risen Master, when Thomas, sceptical as to their testimony, wished to put his finger into the wounds of Jesus—who was rational, if not the apostles, and irrational, if not Thomas? And, notwithstanding, for how many people would not Thomas be the type of prudence, if he had not become, by tradition, that of doubt?

Let us resume. That power which supplies evidence, that power which, at the moment when a man, advancing upon the ocean of thought, begins to lose his footing, and feels himself overwhelmed by the waves, lifts him up, sustains him, and enables him to swim through the foam of doubt to the pure and tranquil haven of certainty, is *faith*. It is by faith, according to the apostles (Heb., xi, 1), that what we hope for is brought nigh, and what we see not is made visible. It is faith which supplies the place of sight, the testimony of the senses, personal experience and mathematical evidence.[1]

[1] The facts of which we have no personal knowledge or experience are, so to speak, without us. They have, what the Germans call, an objective but not a subjective reality. They exist, but, so far as we are concerned, might as well not exist. We cannot be said, in any proper sense of the word to possess them. How then do they become ours? By faith in the testimony of others is the common reply. But a mere belief, or a passive reception of testimony, would leave them as much without us as ever. They would exist for us, but not in us. But faith is an active principle. It seizes and appropriates the truth, and lodges it as a living element in the soul. It is thus, as our author shows, a sort of mental creation, giving, as it does, reality and power to the invisible and the future. "It is the substance (realization) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction, vision) of things not seen." By means of it we know what would otherwise be unknown, and do what would otherwise be undone. It is an energetic principle, and in the department of religion, "worketh by love, and overcometh the world." By its aid we are made to live, even while on earth, in the spiritual and eternal world. "We walk by faith, not by sight." Yet faith, as Vinet beautifully remarks, is the vision of the soul.

"The want of sight she well supplies,
She makes the pearly gates appear,
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near."—T

Faith is not the forced and passive adherence of a spirit vanquished by proofs; it is a power of the soul, as inexplicable in its principle as any of the native qualities which distinguish man amongst his fellow-creatures; a power which does not content itself with receiving the truth, but seizes it, embraces it, identifies itself with it, and permits itself to be carried by it towards all the consequences which it indicates or commands.

Faith is not credulity; the most credulous man is not always he who believes the best. A belief, easily adopted, is as easily lost; and the firmest convictions are generally those which have cost the most. Credulity is but the servile compliance of a feeble mind; while faith demands the entire sphere and energy of the soul.

Let us add, that it is a capacity and a function, the measure and intensity of which vary with individuals, while the direct evidence is for all equal and identical. Among the partizans of the same doctrine, and the equally sincere defenders of the same truth, some believe more strongly; the object of their faith is more real,—is nearer and more vividly present to their minds. While others, whose conviction is full and free from doubts, do not possess so strong a conception, so vivid a view of the object of faith.

It might be supposed that when reasoning has produced conviction, there can be no further use or place for faith. This is a mistake. Reasoning leaves the truth without us. To become a part of our life, a part of ourselves, it requires to be vivified by faith. If the soul[1] concur not with the intellect, certainly the most legitimate would want strength and vivacity. There is a courage of the intellect like the courage of the soul, and thoroughly to believe a strange truth supposes, in some cases, a power which all do not possess. In vain will some persons try to do this; for the conclusions to which they have come by a series of logical deductions, with difficulty produce upon their minds an impression of reality. A great difference will always exist between reasoning and seeing, between drawing a conclusion and making an experiment. It would seem, after all, that the mind has yet need of sight; that it does not yet possess that strong and efficacious conviction which

[1] Here, as in many other instances, the term *soul* is used in a peculiar and restricted sense, as signifying the sentimental and imaginative part of our nature.—T.

it derives from a sensible impression; and it is for this that faith is useful; it is a sort of sight. Moreover, even when we have gathered together all the elements of certainty, the most satisfactory reasoning does not always in itself secure perfect repose to our minds.* It might be said that, in the case of many persons, the more the road from the premises to the conclusion was long and circuitous, the more their conviction loses in fulness, as if it were fatigued by its wanderings, and had arrived exhausted at the end of its reasoning. Often will an obstinate doubt come to place itself in the train of the most logical deductions, a peculiar doubt, which brings no proofs, which makes no attempt to legitimate itself, but which, after all, throws a shadow over our best acquired convictions. When it is not born from within, it comes from without; spread in the crowd that surrounds us, it besieges us with the mass of all strange unbeliefs. It is not known how difficult it is to believe in the midst of a crowd which does not believe. Here is a noble exercise of faith; here its grandeur appears. This faith in contested truths, when it is calm, patient, and modest, is one of the essential attributes of all those men who have been great in "the order of minds." What is it that gives so much sublimity, in our imaginations, to the great names of Galileo, Descartes, and Bacon, unless it be their faith in the truths with which they had enriched their minds? A Newton reigns with majesty over the world of science, but he reigns without combat; his image is that of a sovereign, not of a hero. But we feel more than admiration for the great names I have mentioned; gratitude, mingled with tenderness and respect, is the only sentiment which can become us. Our soul thanks them for not having doubted, for having preserved their faith in the midst of universal dissent, and for having heroically dispensed with the adherence of their contemporaries.

Shall I say it even? Yes, but to our shame. Faith finds its use even in the facts of personal experience. Such is our mind, such, at least, is it become, that it distinguishes between external and internal experience, and yielding without hesitation to the testimony of the senses it costs it an effort to yield to the testimony of consciousness. It requires submission, and by consequence, a species of faith, to admit those primitive truths which it carries within it, which have no antecedents, which bring no other war-

rant but their own existence, which cannot be proved, but which are felt. Irresistible in their nature, still some require an effort in order to believe them. Have we not seen some such who have endeavoured to draw their notions of justice from those of utility, so as to go back, by this circuit, to matter, and consequently to physical experience?[1] It might be said that it was painful to them to see the road to knowledge shortened before them, that they regretted the absence of that circuitous path which God wished to spare them; and it is this strange prejudice that obliges us, in some sort, to do violence to the nature of things, and exhibit, as an act of faith, what is only a manifestation of evidence.

However this may be, faith, that is to say in all possible spheres the *vision* of the *invisible*, and the *absent* brought *nigh*, is the energy of the soul, and the energy of life. We do not go too far in saying that it is the point of departure for all action; since to act is to quit the firm position of the present, and stretch the hand into the future. But this, at least, is certain, that faith is the source of everything in the eyes of man which bears a character of dignity and force. Vulgar souls wish to see, to touch, to grasp; others have the eye of faith, and they are great. It is always by having faith in others, in themselves, in duty, or in the Divinity, that men have done great things. Faith has been, in all time, the strength of the feeble and the salvation of the miserable. In great

[1] Our author here refers to the sensual philosophy of such men as Condillac and Helvetius, who, taking Locke's idea that all our knowledge is derived from sensation and reflection, have carried it out to the most extreme and absurd consequences, proving thus that there must be some defect in the system of Locke, or at least in his method of stating it. These material and Epicurean philosophers refer all our notions of justice to utility, all our feelings of reverence, affection, and gratitude, to mere emotion and sensation. In their analysis, the loftiest sentiments are reduced to the images and impressions of material forms. The very soul is materialized, and the eternal God is either blotted from existence, or represented as the shadowy and infinite refinement of physical existence.

The Abbé Condillac, who was a worthy man, and a beautiful writer, never intended to go so far as this, but his successors soon ran down his system to absolute atheism, which, for a long time, was the prevalent philosophy in France. A better system is beginning to prevail there; still, even the spiritual philosophy is liable to run to the same extreme as gross materialism. The great difficulty with such philosophers as Cousin and others, is, that they have not the fear of God before their eyes. Their transcendentalism is liable to become as sceptical and irreligious as the sensualism of Helvetius and Voltaire.—T.

crises, in grand exigencies, the favourable chance has always been for him who hoped against hope. And the greatness of individuals or of nations may be measured precisely by the greatness of their faith.

It was by faith that Leonidas, charged with three hundred men for the salvation of Greece, encountered eight hundred thousand Persians. His country had sent him to die at Thermopylæ. He died there. What he did was by no means reasonable, according to ordinary views. All the probabilities were against him; but in throwing into the balance the weight of his lofty soul, and three hundred heroic deaths, he did violence to fortune. His death, as one has happily said, was "well laid out." Greece, united by so great an example, pledged herself to be invincible. And the same spirit of faith—faith, I mean, in her own power—was the principle of all those actions in that famous Persian war which secured the independence of Greece.

What was it that sustained, amid the wastes of the ocean, that intrepid mortal who has given us a new world? It was an ardent faith. His spirit, convinced, had already touched America, had already trodden its shores, had there founded colonies and states, and conveyed by a new road, shorter though indirect, the religion of Jesus Christ to the regions of the rising sun.[1] He led his companions to a known land; he went home. Thus, from the moment that he received this conviction, with what patience have you seen him go from sovereign to sovereign, entreating them to accept a world! He pursued, during long years, his sublime mendicity, pained by refusals, but never affected by contempt, bearing every thing, provided only that he should be furnished with the means of giving to some one that marvellous land which he had placed in the midst of the ocean. Amid the dangers of an adventurous navigation, amid the cries of a mutinous crew, seeing his death written in the angry eyes of his sailors, he keeps his faith, he lives by his faith, and asks only three days, the last of which presents to him his conquest.

What power had the last Brutus at the moment when he abandoned his faith? From the time of his melancholy vision, pro-

[1] That is to say, Columbus believed that by going west he would reach the eastern hemisphere by an easier yet more indirect route, and convey to those distant regions the blessings of Christianity.—T.

duced by a diminution of that faith, it might have been predicted that his own destiny and that of the republic were finished. He felt it himself; it was with a presentiment of defeat that he fought at Philippi. And such a presentiment always realizes itself.

The Romans at their origin persuaded themselves that they could found an eternal city. This conviction was the principle of their disastrous greatness. Perpetuated from generation to generation, this idea conquered for them the world. An unheard-of policy caused them never to treat with an enemy except as conquerors. How much value did they attach to faith, when, after the battle of Cannæ, they thanked the imprudent Varro for not having despaired of the salvation of the republic? It would certainly make a vicious circle to say, we believe in victory, therefore we shall conquer. But it is not always the people who reason the best that are the strongest; and the power of man generally lies more in his conviction itself than in the goodness of the proofs by which it is sustained.

Whence is derived the long duration of certain forms of government and of certain institutions which to-day we find so little conformed to right and reason? From the faith of the people, from a sentiment slightly rational and by no means clear, but energetic and profound, a sort of political religion. It is important that a government should be just, a dynasty beneficent, an institution reasonable; but faith, up to a certain point, can take the place of these things, while these do not always supply the want of faith. The best institutions, in respect to solidity and duration, are not the most conformed to theory; faith preserves them better than reason; and the most rational are not quite consolidated, until after the convictions of the mind have become the property of the heart, until the citizen, no longer searching incessantly for the reasons of submission, obeys by a certain lively and voluntary impulse, the principle of which is nothing but faith.

Another thing still more surprising! faith often attaches itself to a man. There are great characters, powerful wills, to which has been given a mysterious empire over less energetic natures. The greater part of men live by this faith in powerful men. A small number of individuals lead in their orbit the whole human race. They do not weigh all the reasons which such men give; they do not calculate all the chances which they develope; they

do not judge them, they only believe in them. Many men, for decision, for action, for faith, follow the impulse of these privileged natures! And who can sufficiently wonder at it? Their feebleness is transformed into strength under that powerful influence, and they become capable, by sympathy, of things which, left to themselves, they would never have imagined, thought of, nor desired. Amid dangers, when fear is in all hearts, the crowd derive courage and confidence from the assured words of a man who has no one to trust but himself. Every one confides in *him* who confides in himself; and his audacious hope is often the best resource in a moment of general anxiety.

But we leave to others the task of multiplying examples. We are sure that from all points of history proofs arise of the truth we exhibit. Wherever man has given to the future the vividness of the present, and to the representations of his own mind the power of reality, wherever man believes in others, in himself, or in God, he is strong. I mean with a relative strength; strong in one respect, feeble perhaps in all others; strong for an emergency, feeble perhaps beyond it; strong for good, strong also for evil.

Human religions, then, have rendered homage to a truth, and comprehended a general want, in furnishing to man an object of faith, superior in its nature to all others. They have fully acknowledged that, in the rude path of life, man has not enough in what he knows and in what he sees; that his most solid supports are in the region of the invisible, and that he will always be less strong by realities than belief. They give support to numerous souls who cannot confide in themselves; and, by placing in heaven succour and hope, they govern from on high the events which envelope and protect the whole life.

VII.

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—JOHN, xx, 29.

WE have sufficiently exalted human faith, let us abase it now. Having spoken of its marvels, let us recount its miseries.

Human religions have recognized a want of our nature; they have excited and cherished it, but they have deceived it. In the first place, they were pure inventions of man. Not that faith, considered as a motive of action and a source of energy, should absolutely need to repose upon the truth, but that what is false cannot last, and must, at the very least, give place to a new error. Faith in human inventions may be firm and lively so long as there is a proportion between them and the degree of existing mental culture. That epoch past, faith gradually evaporates, leaving dry, so to speak, one class of society after another; the dregs of belief then remain with the dregs of the people; the more elevated classes are sceptical or indifferent; and the thinkers are fatalists or atheists. If in some extraordinary cases the old religion continues, it is, as we have seen in a preceding discourse, at the expence of intellectual advancement and every other kind of progress. These old religions, instead of giving energy to the soul, exhaust it; instead of sustaining, oppress it.

In another aspect, the faith of the heathen is still less commendable. It is entirely alien to the moral perfections of man; often, indeed, directly opposed to it. It proposes to console man, it more frequently tyrannizes over him. No where has it for its final aim to regenerate him; no where does it rise to the sublime idea of causing him to find his happiness in his regeneration.

Shall we say aught respecting the faith of deists? Thoroughly to appreciate it in an epoch like ours, it ought, at the very first,

to be divested of what it has involuntarily borrowed from the Gospel. The deism of our day is more or less tinctured with Christianity; this is the reason why it does not, like that of antiquity, lose itself in fatalism. But whatever it may be, and taking it in its best forms, we must acknowledge, that the faith of the deist is only an opinion; an opinion too, exceedingly vague and fluctuating, and which, as a motive of action, does not avail so much as the faith of the heathen. Let deism, at least, have its devotees, who to please their divinity, permit themselves to be crushed beneath the wheels of his car, and we will acknowledge that deism is a religion.

Thus it is not without a kind of pleasure that we behold the sceptics of our day, not knowing what to do with their natural religion, and haunted by a desire to believe, frankly addressing themselves to other objects, and, strange to tell, making for themselves a religion without a divinity. I do not speak here of the covetous, who, according to St. Paul, are real idolators, nor of the sensual, who, according to the same apostle, "make a god of their belly." It is of souls not sunk so low, souls who, less sceptical originally, have retained their craving, their thirst for the infinite, but have mistaken its true import. This craving for God and religion, which unconsciously torments them, induces them to seek upon earth some object of adoration; for it is necessary that man should adore something. It is difficult to say how they come to invest with a character of infinity objects whose finite nature must continually strike us; but it is certain that this illusion is common. Some make science the object of their passionate devotion. Others evoke the genius of humanity, or, as they say, its *ideal*, devoting to its perfection and triumph, equally ideal, whatever they possess of affection, of thought, and of power. Others, and, in our day, the greater number, have made for themselves a religion of political liberty. The triumph of certain principles of right in society is to them what the kingdom of God and eternal life are to the Christian. They have their worship, their devotion, their fanaticism; and those very men who smile at the mysticism of Christian sects have also their mysticism, less tender and less spiritual, but more inconceivable.

Thus, in spite of all their efforts to the contrary, and, notwithstanding all their pretensions, each one, we doubt not, has his re-

ligion, each has his worship, each deifies something, and when he knows not what *idea* to make divine he deifies himself.

It was in this way that infidelity commenced in the garden of Eden; and as such was its beginning, such also is its final result. In reality all other apotheoses, if we examine them carefully, come to this. In science, in reason, in liberty, it is himself to which man renders homage. But faith in oneself originates a particular kind of worship, which it is important to notice. It consists of a circle, the most vicious and absurd. The subject and the object are confounded in the same individual; the adorer adores himself, the believer believes in himself; that is to say, since worship always supposes a relation of inequality, the same individual finds himself inferior to himself; and since faith supposes an authority, the authority in this case submits to the same authority. This confusion of ideas no longer strikes us when we have permitted the inconceivable idea to enter our minds, that we are something beside ourselves,—that the branch can subsist without the trunk; whence it would follow that we must be at once above and beneath ourselves, while the same persons find themselves at once their own masters and their own servants. Thus live by choice and system some men who pass for sages. They have faith in themselves, in their wisdom, energy, will, and virtue; and when this faith succeeds in rooting itself firmly in the heart, it is capable of producing, outwardly, very great effects. I have said great, but upon this point I refer you to Jesus Christ himself, who says, "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination with God."

Do you prefer this faith in ideas, and this faith in self, to the faith of the heathen in their imaginary gods? And why not see that, independently of the pride and irreligion which characterize these two forms of faith, they are, even humanly speaking, extremely defective? Here it is proper to notice the imprudence with which some have exalted *subjective* faith, according to the name given it by the schools, above *objective* faith, by intimating that the main thing is to believe firmly, whatever, in other respects, be the object of faith; intending, doubtless, to apply this maxim only to the variations of the truth, not to the truth itself. But how easy is the transition from the one to the other. Why deny that the men of whom we have just been speaking possess, in

a high degree, subjective faith; and that such faith may be in them a quick and intense energy, fitted equally for resistance and movement? But is this the only question to be asked respecting it? Are we to be satisfied with its being powerful, without demanding an account of the manner in which it uses its power? What, then, are the effects of this much vaunted faith of man in man? Does it not leave in his interior nature immense deficiencies? Does it not cultivate it, to speak more plainly, in the wrong direction, and in a way to corrupt it? When all the fluids of the body are conveyed to one part of the system, what becomes of the rest? When all the devotions of man are addressed to man, what becomes of God? And what a monstrosity is that faith which has become erroneous and false to such an extent as this?

But do not believe that this faith, even in its own sphere, has all the prerogatives ascribed to it. There are, I allow, inflexible spirits, whom age only hardens, and who die in their superstition, fanatical, to the last, touching enlightenment, civilization, and freedom. But the greater number disabuse and free themselves before they die. Some of them have been seen smiling at their former worship, and trampling under their feet with disdain the ruins of their former idols. The soul is easily satiated with what is not true; and disgust is then proportioned to previous enthusiasm. Ye will come to this, ye who believe in the regeneration of the human race by political freedom; ye who have never known that, until man becomes the servant of God he can never enjoy true freedom; ye will groan over your dreams, when popular passions have perhaps coloured them with blood! Ye will come to this, ye who are confident in your native generosity, in the liberality of your sentiments and the purity of your intentions, in a word, ye that have faith in yourselves. When a thousand humiliating falls have convinced you of your weakness, when disabused with reference to others, ye shall be disabused also with reference to yourselves, when ye shall exclaim, like Brutus, "O virtue, thou art only a phantom!" what will then remain to you? That which has remained to so many others, the pleasures of selfishness or of sensuality, the last bourne of all errors, the vile residuum of all false systems. If, indeed, it shall not then be given you to accept in exchange for the faith which has deserted you, a better faith, which will never desert you, and which it now remains for us to announce.

We declare to you the faith of the Gospel; study its characteristics, and become acquainted with its excellence.

No where is the importance of faith so highly estimated as in the Gospel. In the first place, you learn, at the very first glance, that it is faith which saves, not for time, but for eternity. "By faith ye are saved," says St. Paul. "If thou confess Jesus Christ with thy mouth, and believe with thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "Christ is the author of salvation to all them that believe." This is the first characteristic of Christian faith, that salvation depends on it.

But do not, on this account, consider it as a meritorious act. While in other religions faith is an arbitrary work to which it has pleased the Divinity to attach a merit and a recompense, a work without any other value than an accidental one, communicated to it by the promise from on high; in the Gospel, faith is represented as having an intrinsic power, a virtue of its own, a direct influence upon the life, and by the life upon salvation. Faith, in the Gospel, does not save, except by regenerating. It consists in receiving into the heart those things which are fitted to change it. The Christian, with reference to God, to himself, to life, has convictions entirely different from those of the world, if, indeed, the world has upon these subjects any thing which resembles convictions. But such is the doctrine of the Gospel, that when it penetrates a spirit agitated by remorse and the terrors of the judgment to come, it produces in it a gratitude and a joy, the inevitable effect of which is to impel it in a direction opposite to that which it has hitherto followed. The believer has found peace; can he abandon the source of peace? Can he wander away to shattered cisterns that can hold no water, when within his reach he has fountains of living waters springing up into everlasting life? Can he fail to obey Him, who, for his benefit, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? Will he not submit to the providence of that God, who, having given to him his only begotten Son, has proved to him, that in all things, He can desire nothing but his happiness? Will he who loves his Father in heaven hate any of his brethren on earth? And will he fail to pray, who knows that the very Spirit of God makes intercession for him with unutterable sighs? Yes! Christian faith is the victory over the world; Christian faith contains all the elements of a holy

life. And what proves this better than all reasonings is, the many holy lives, so consistent and harmonious, of which Christianity alone supplies the model, and especially those wondrous revolutions which render truly converted persons new creatures; which subdue to sweetness so many angry souls, to patience, impetuous natures, to humility, haughty spirits, to sincerity, dissembling characters, to tranquillity, troubled hearts; which, in a word, creates in man a new soul, capable of all the virtues the very opposite of the vices which tyrannized over him.

The unity of life ought to correspond to the unity of principle, and not only so, but to its immensity. Faith in something finite can produce only finite results; faith in any thing imperfect or fleeting, only imperfect and fleeting results. But God is the principle which includes all principles; he is more, he is the principle which regulates and quickens all. Every thing is false and mutilated if it relate not to God; but all is true, complete, united, fruitful, which has the true God for its principle. What part of the field of morals can remain sterile and useless under an influence from which nothing can escape? Over what virtue cannot God preside? With what duty can he dispense? How shall He, who is justice, goodness, and beauty supreme, fail to attract to himself whatever is just and great and beautiful? It is on this account that the knowledge of God, of the true God, is the only principle of a perfect morality; and most insensate is he who would ascribe to God any other.

But do not demand of Christian faith only splendid things. It has these, it is true, but it holds in tension all the strings of the soul at once, and extends its influence to all points at the same time. We have seen Leonidas perish at Thermopylæ for the salvation of Greece. Christian faith would teach a Christian to do as much as that; but it would also render him capable, every day, of a thousand little sacrifices. It would arm his soul against all internal assaults of anger, of envy, and of false glory. Could the faith of Leonidas do all these things?

This infinite variety, this immensity of application of the Christian faith, is better explained by a reference to its dominant characteristic, which is love. Love prescribes no limits. Were a sentiment only of legal justice in the heart of a Christian, he would try to measure his task, he would trace for himself precise limits,

he would know where to stop; but obeying because he loves, loving Him whom he cannot love too much, he abandons himself to the impulse of his heart as the worldling abandons himself to his passion. He never says, and he never can say, it is enough. He would fear that he loved no longer when he could say to his love, "Hither shalt thou come, and no farther." Love knows neither precaution nor reserve; it ever desires more; it is inflamed by its own movement, it grows by sacrifices themselves, expects to receive in the measure that it gives, and is itself its own reward; for the true reward of love is to love still more. Where, then, in its applications, shall a faith stop which resolves itself into love?

It is scarcely necessary, after all this, to prove that Christian faith is an energetic principle of action. To *abstain* and *sustain* constitute but half of the morality founded upon love. Very far from confining itself to a character of obedient passivity, the holy impatience of love seeks and multiplies occasions of testifying its ardour towards the Saviour God from whom it has emanated. Faithful to the express commands of the Gospel, and the example of Jesus Christ, whose holy activity never relaxed, Christian love, each moment, creates for itself new spheres of labour, and new domains to conquer. Will not even the enemies of Christianity be the first to admit an activity which vexes and alarms them daily? Do not those who accuse Christian faith of fanaticism render a beautiful homage to the force of action which dwells in it? Christ well characterized the faith which he brought into the world, when he said with so much energy,—"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say to this fig tree, be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou cast into the midst of the sea; and it shall be done." Such, indeed, is the power of Christian faith, that, long before the appearance of Christ, when it was nourished only in the shadow of Him that was to come, already Christians by anticipation, under the ancient covenant, we are rendered capable, by their faith, of the most heroic efforts and the most extraordinary works. Read in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the picture of what this faith enabled the Christians of the ancient covenant to do; bring together that picture and the one presented from the days of the apostles to ours, and you will not doubt, that if faith, in general, is an energetic principle of action, Christian faith is the most energetic of all.

A last characteristic of this faith is its certainty. I do not speak of that array of external proofs which form the imposing bulwark of the Christian revelation; proofs for which the sceptics of our day affect a contempt so little philosophical, and which scarcely one in a hundred gives himself the trouble to examine. I do not speak of them here, for they are not equally within the reach of all the faithful. But the Christian has a proof better still; he has God present in the heart; he feels, every moment, the influence of the Spirit of God, in his soul. He loves; therefore he has the truth. His proof is not of a nature to be communicated by words; but neither can words take it away. You cannot prove to him that he does not love God; and if he loves God, will you dare to insist that he does not know him? I have already asked it once, and I ask it again: Can he who loves God be deceived; is he not in the truth? And if Christianity alone gives him power to love God, is not Christianity exclusively the truth? Such is the certainty in which the faithful rejoice. I do not add that it is cherished and quickened by the Holy Spirit. I only speak of obvious facts, facts respecting which the unbelieving as well as the believing can satisfy themselves. And I limit myself to saying, that the faith of the true Christian has for its peculiar characteristic a certainty which elevates it above that of any other belief.

Behold, ye men of the world, ye thinkers, ye great actors in the concerns of time! behold the faith which I propose to your hearts, empty and famishing for faith, deceived rather by faith itself. Certainly it does not depend upon me to make you accept it, by the picture I have traced, nor upon you to become its votaries, through this simple exposition. Arguments do not change man; it is life which teaches life; it is God who reveals God. But is what we have said without some attainable end and application? No, if we have succeeded in making you understand at least the imperfections of your faith, and the superiority of Christian faith with reference to life and action. As to the first point, it is, I believe, beyond contradiction. As to the second, we have proved, it appears to us, all that we had to prove. We have not demonstrated that the Christian religion is true, that the revelations upon which it rests are authentic. Our only object was to demonstrate that like all other beliefs, it renders homage to a want of the human soul, and, what no other belief has yet done, that it has

satisfied this want; that it furnishes to man a principle of energy and action, the distinctive features of which are not found united in any other faith; that it has an intensity, a generality of application, an elevation of tendency, and in fine a certainty which no other possesses; that in all these respects it presents a type of perfection which has never been realized in any human invention; and that if God himself has given a faith to the world, it is impossible that he should have given a better in any respect. After this, it would appear quite superfluous to enquire if the Christian religion is true. To us this proof is sufficient; and we earnestly pray that it may strike others as it strikes us. May such, by the grace of God, be the result of this meditation.

VIII.

ATHEISM OF THE EPHESIANS.

"Without God in the world."—EPHESIANS, ii, 12.

THESE words were addressed by St. Paul to the recently converted Christians at Ephesus, and form a part of the chapter in which that great apostle reminds them of the state of darkness, of moral depravity and condemnation, in which they were plunged before the messengers of salvation had proclaimed to them Jesus Christ. The painful truth included in this text, being established by the infallible authority of the divine word, and being found in accordance with the whole current of Christian revelation, we might dispense with the task of seeking any other proofs of it. But God has not forbidden us to prove and illustrate the perfect and wonderful harmony of his word with the clearest principles of reason and nature. On this account we invite you to investigate with us the proofs of that proposition of St. Paul, that the Ephesians, before knowing Jesus Christ were without God in the world.

Aid us by your attention. And if you involuntarily feel some prejudices against the position we are about to sustain, be willing to repress them for a few moments. I am not going to prove that the Ephesians, before their conversion, did not believe in God; that were an untenable position. The belief in God is so inherent in the human race, so essential to our reason, that the most depraved persons can with difficulty free themselves from it. Not every one that wishes it is an atheist; the very devils believe and tremble. How could Paul say such a thing of the Ephesians, in sight, as it were, of the temple of their Diana? How could he say so when, at Athens, beholding altars every where, he had reproached the inhabitants of that celebrated city with being in some sort too devout? What he wished to say, and what we seek to prove, is, that in the case of an unconverted Ephesian, nay more, of the

most enlightened Ephesian, of him, who in the steps of the philosophers had risen to the idea of the divine unity, it would have been the same thing, not to believe in God, as to believe in him, as he did.

And if this even should appear to some hard to believe, I beg them to give attention to the following question. What is it to believe in the existence of a being? Is it not to believe that there is a subject, in which certain qualities unite, that distinguish it from all others? Do not these qualities, or properties, make the particular object or being what it is. and not something else; and when we deny all these qualities, or properties, one after another, does it not amount to denying the object itself?

What would you say of a people who had resolved to give themselves a king, who had even invested a man with that illustrious dignity, but who, from some motive, should take from him successively the right to raise armies, and to make war and peace, the privilege of nominating to offices, and the revenues necessary to sustain his dignity, and finally those marks of respect which his title appears to demand? You would say that this people had no king. In vain would a man exist among them whom they called king; he is not one, since he cannot be such without certain qualities and prerogatives he has not. This is a republic, under the name of a monarchy.

What, in like manner, would you say of a man, or of a society, who should say, we acknowledge a God, but who should refuse to that God the attributes most essential to his dignity, and most inseparable from the idea of his perfection; and reduce him, so to speak, to nothing but a name? Assuredly, you would say, that such a man and such a society do not believe in God, and that under the name of religion they profess atheism.

Very well, it will be said, the principle is incontestable; but who dreams of disputing it? Is there in the world any one so unreasonable as to deny the perfections of God, such as his goodness, his justice, and his providence? Yes, there is one in the world who denies them. It is the Ephesian before his conversion.

Here we have a second step to take. We have seen that to deny the attributes essential to the nature of God is to deny God; you must also grant us now, that to deny the acts which are a necessary consequence of his attributes is to deny those attributes

themselves. In other words, it is to deny the perfections of God, to refuse to him the exercise of these perfections. But what is a perfection without its exercise? What is holiness without its application? What is it but a useless power? It is a name, it is nothing.

You believe in the justice of God, St. Paul might say to the Ephesians. You believe then, that God sustains, defends, and vindicates a moral order, which he has established, for the benefit of his creatures, and for his own glory. You believe that this justice, being infinite, cannot be satisfied but by an obedience entire and unreserved. You believe that this justice, being spiritual, demands the obedience, not of the hands only, but of the heart and the will. You believe that this justice being inviolable, can receive no stain without demanding a reparation, sudden, complete, absolute. You believe all this, you say; consequently, you believe also, that your sins ought to be punished, that your heart which is not given to God ought to be condemned; that your penitence effaces none of your transgressions, since what is done cannot be undone, and violated order is not less violated; that your good works can no more do so, since the good you have done in reparation of your sins ought to be done just as much as if you had no sins for which to make reparation. You believe, then, that you are condemned, necessarily condemned. If you do not believe it, you have a God without justice, that is to say, you have no God.

I suppose, however, might St. Paul say, that you believe in his justice; but do you believe in his goodness? You believe in it, you say. But certainly not in a goodness limited, mingled with weakness, liable to change. You believe that God loves his creatures with an everlasting love; that no tenderness in the world, not even that of a mother, is comparable to his; that it is not only your body, but your soul, that God loves; and that this love is as active as it is eternal. Is it not true that you believe all this! Ah! who does not believe it; who does not need to believe it? Is it not under the features of love that you are pleased to represent the Supreme Being? It is so. But between you and his goodness, what frightful phantom rises, and covers, as with boding wing, his face full of benignity? It is the phantom of his justice, the image of your sins. Try to invoke, as a Father, him whom you have never ceased to offend! Try to believe in all the goodness of God,

in spite of his vengeance![1] Terrible alternative, not to be able to admit the goodness of God without denying his justice, nor to believe in his justice without denying his goodness. No, not to you, is he the gracious God; but he shall be, if you will listen to the marvellous fact, we are charged to announce to you. A Redeemer has been found; the great mediation, so often shadowed on earth, in all the religions of the nations, has been realized in heaven. God has given his Son, and his Son has given himself, to offer to his Father the only satisfaction he could accept, the only atonement which could be efficacious, the only reconciliation which "reconciles all things." If he had not given himself, justice, which nothing can arrest, would have had its course. But can you, who have not received Jesus Christ, believe in God as a gracious God? Can you from the depths of your misery and rejection cry to him, "Our Father who art in heaven?" You have in the world a master, an accuser, a judge; have you truly a God?

You believe in providence, might St. Paul say to the Ephesian. Ah! blessed is he who believes in so great a mystery! It is a proof that he has passed from death to life. But do you know thoroughly what it is to believe in providence? Alas! I doubt it; for why, when an event occurs, which involves your welfare, do you immediately speak of fate or chance? And why, when you receive some benefit from men, does your gratitude stop with them, instead of rising to the Eternal? And why, when you receive some evil from them, do you think only of being indignant towards the mortal hand which strikes you, and never think of adoring with awe the divine authority, without whose permission you could not have been struck? And why, in view of the revolutions of the world, do you perceive nothing but secondary causes, which indeed ought to be carefully studied, but from which you never rise to the great First Cause? Is that to believe in providence? But what we have just referred to is only a part of the sphere of the activity of Jehovah. If he controls the world of things, he governs also, under another name, the world of morals; and that name is the Holy Spirit. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? Do you believe that from him proceed all good resolutions and all good thoughts? Do you believe that his influence is freely given by our heavenly

[1] Vengeance here means, simply the administration of justice, particularly in the infliction of punishment.—T.

Father, to all those who ask it? It would seem to require no great effort to believe that. No doctrine is more reasonable. We cannot, without absurdity, deny to God, who has made our minds, the power to influence and direct them. But if you do not believe in the Holy Spirit, in that quickening soul of the moral world, I ask you, what God do you possess?

Behold, my brethren, what St. Paul might have said to the Ephesians before their conversion. Behold, too, what he could not say to them after their conversion. The Christian sees manifested and developed, in perfect harmony, the justice, the goodness, and the providence of God. In Jesus Christ they are consummated, realized, enthroned. In him the divine justice has been accomplished,—by him the goodness of God has been proclaimed,—by him, in fine, the government of the Holy Spirit and a moral providence have been placed beyond a doubt. These truths are the whole substance and aim of the Gospel. The Christian alone knows God; the Christian alone has a God.

I feel as much as any one, all that is paradoxical and harsh which such an assertion at the first moment presents. But I ask, what is that God who should have no right either to our adoration, our confidence, or our love? And, indeed, how can we adore a God whose justice, pliable and soft, should accommodate itself to the corruption of our hearts, and the perversity of our thoughts? How, on the other hand, love a God whom we could not behold but under the aspect and with the attributes of a severe and inexorable judge? How could we confide in a God who, indifferent to our temporal interests, and to those of our souls, should exercise no supervision over our conduct and destiny? And, we ask once more, what is a God whom we can neither know, adore, nor love? In truth, my brethren, for it serves little purpose to soften the words, the profession of the faith of the Ephesian is an involuntary profession of atheism. St. Paul might say to him, do not exile your God, amid the splendours of a distant glory, whence the Sun of righteousness can never warm the moral world, and shed upon it the purifying influence of its rays; or, if such be the God you wish, do not, I pray you, mock yourselves so cruelly; and at least respect, by never pronouncing, a name, which you can no longer regard as holy, or rather pronounce it unceasingly, as the name of a being for ever absent and lost; cultivate, and, so to speak, en-

hance, by your tears, that idea the grandeur of which will remind you of your destitution; but do not abuse, do not flatter yourselves, by imagining you have a God, when you have nothing more than the idea. Acknowledge to yourselves, not that the universe has no God, a thing you have never been able to doubt, but that you, in some sense fallen below the rest of created beings, are without God in the world.

Behold what reason, honestly interrogated, furnishes us touching the religion of the Ephesian before his conversion. But as his religion, such also will his life be. For it is impossible that he that is without God in the world should live like him who has a God. And to prove it, we do not require to develope to you his moral conduct, and show you how far he is removed from that holiness of which God is at once the source, the motive, and the model. Without running over the whole circle of his relations, it is sufficient to say what he is with relation to God; in other words, to point out the place which God occupies in his moral life. That place, alas! how small it is! The idea of God is neither the centre of his thoughts nor the soul of his life, but an idea accessory, supernumerary, very often importunate, and associated indifferently with his other thoughts. If God did not exist at all, the circle of his ideas would not be less complete, nor his reason less satisfied. When he is occupied with the idea of God, it is as a simple view of the intellect, not as a real fact, which determines the aim of existence, and the value of life. He applies it less to practical purposes than the astronomer the figure of the earth, the course of the stars, and the measure of the heavens. His belief in God is almost purely negative. It permits God to exist, not being able to do otherwise; but this belief neither controls his life nor regulates his conduct. He believes in God; he says so when occasion requires it; but it does not gratify him to speak of it to his family or his friends; he never entertains his children with it, and he makes no use of it in their education. In a word, his thought is not full of God, does not live upon God; so that we might say of him, in this first relation, that he is without God in the world.

Yet there is one voice in the universe. The heavens declare the glory of God; though they have no language, properly speaking, their voice is heard even by the dullest ear; and through the ear, that voice sometimes penetrates to the heart. Yes, in view

of that magnificent aspect of nature, all full of love and life, the heart of the Ephesian is sometimes softened. I will not ask him, why, in gazing upon these beauties, his heart soon aches, and his bosom heaves with sighs; I will not ask him whence comes that involuntary sadness which succeeds the rapture of the first view. I will not say that what then weighs upon his thoughts is the contrast between nature so beautiful and a soul degraded; between an order so perfect, and the disorder of his feelings and thoughts; between that exuberance of life, spread through immensity, and the consciousness of a fallen existence, which dares not reflect upon its duration. I will not ask him to observe that this feeling is so appropriate to a soul like his, that he recurs to it at each emotion of joy, as to a signal, appointed to poison and to tarnish it. And I will not conclude, as I might do, that all this comes from the fact, that God is absent. No, I shall only ask, What is that emotion? What does it prove? Does it give you a God? Alas, that confused feeling has moved the souls of millions who have gazed upon these beauties, and has left them such as they were. Nature, which excites alternately pleasure and pain, regenerates no one. Observe the Ephesian, whom it has touched. That fleeting motion, as soon as dissipated, restores him wholly to the world. Even if he rendered worship to his Creator, his life is not a worship; it is not devoted to the Lord of heaven and earth. His conduct obeys a thousand impulses by turns, but he does not know the meaning of that admirable precept, "Whatsoever ye do, do it for the Lord, and not for man; glorify God in your spirits and in your bodies, which are his." It is not for God that he is a literary man, a merchant, an artizan, a man of property, a labourer, a citizen, or the head of a family; it is for himself. He is his own God and his own law.

Events adverse and prosperous come by turns. They succeed each other without interruption, and always find him without God. Happy,—he has no emotion of gratitude to the Lord. Unhappy, he does not receive the occasion of it as a reproof or a counsel. Sick,—he thinks not of the great Physician. Dying,—he has no hope of heaven. In a word, that thought of God which must be every thing or nothing in the life is nothing in his; nothing, at least, worth estimating. He yields nothing to it, sacrifices nothing, offers nothing. And, after all this, he will tell us that he has a God!

But we have spoken long enough of this imaginary being, this unregenerate Ephesian. Are there, in your opinion, no sceptics but in Ephesus? Is there no heathenism but in the heathen world? Is the portrait we have drawn applicable to those thousands, alas! to those millions of the heathen of Christianity who also live without God in the world? Let there be no delusion here; this description is either false or true. False, it applies to no one, and to the Ephesian idolator no more than another; true, it has its originals in all ages, in all countries, and, without doubt, also among us.

God forbid that I should make but one class of all the persons who do not believe the Gospel. There are those among them who with a slow but persevering pace are climbing towards the truth. There is already something of Christianity in those serious and tender souls who are seeking, on all sides, another God than that which the world has provided for them. For already, without having a clear notion of the Gospel, they have received from the Holy Spirit a secret impulse, which urges them to seek a God, invested with those attributes which the Gospel has revealed, a God of providence. Religion stretches out her hands to them, and salutes them with a gentle name, even at the time they would seem to resist her; for she discerns in them a thirst for righteousness and peace, which she only is capable of satisfying. And she waits for the happy moment when, recognizing the striking harmony between the Christian revelations and the imperfect revelations they have received from the voice within, these Christians by anticipation, these Christians by desire and want, shall become such in fact and profession.

But this takes nothing from the truth we have established, touching the unbeliever who is living without God in the world. And whither would this lead us, were we to pursue the subject? We have spoken only of his opinions, of his interior feelings. And his actions do not they prove his thoughts, according to the energetic language of the prophet, *are all as if there were no God?* This I should aim to show, if the limits of this discourse permitted it. I should discover it to you, as much in the virtuous as in the vicious unbeliever. I should show you in both the same forgetfulness of God, the same indifference to his glory, the same idolatry to self. But a subject of such importance requires space. It is not in a few

words that we can clear up all the difficulties with which it is connected.

But why do I occupy your attention with these things? Have they reference to you? Or is this sermon not made rather for a pagan than for a Christian temple? But is it that doubt and error never come to sit in a Christian church? They may enter thither to seek for light! God bless so good an intention, for there is piety even in that! In such a case, it is proper to speak of these things. But even in an audience, all the members of which are penetrated with the truths I have discussed, such a subject is also appropriate. The Christian cannot but gain something by enquiring diligently into the foundations and privileges of his faith. He ought to love to review the titles of his adoption. He ought also to learn how to exhibit them with dignity, and explain them with gentleness, to those who ask from him an account of his glorious hope. And although the Gospel can prove itself true by its own power, and without any human aid, to a soul thirsting for righteousness, nevertheless the examination of these proofs, so rich and so beautiful, is a natural mean which God often uses to produce or confirm faith. May such, in some degree, be the effect of this discourse. May you return to your houses more convinced and affected with the wonderful attractions of the Gospel. May you exclaim with the sacred poet, "O God, I rejoice in thy word as one that hath found great spoil. It shall be a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. Thou hast made me to know the way of life, I shall ever be with thee; thou hast held me by thy right hand. Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory!"

IX.

GRACE AND LAW.

"By grace ye are saved."—EPHESIANS, ii, 5.

IN no language is there a more attractive word than *grace;* in the Gospel there is none more offensive to the men of the world. The idea of being saved by grace offends their pride, shocks their reason. And they prefer, a thousand times, to the word grace, so sweet and touching, that of law, so formidable and severe. They desire us to speak to them of the precepts of the Gospel, of the morality of the Gospel, but they are not pleased when we call their attention to the gratuitous pardon it announces. We shall not at present explain the causes of this predilection and of this repugnance, which appear to contradict the deepest tendencies of human nature. But we shall endeavour to show that, so far from these two things, grace and law, being irreconcilable, the one conducts necessarily to the other; that the law conducts to grace, and grace, in its turn, leads back to the law.

After we have deduced this truth from the very nature of things we shall appeal to experience, and enable you to see that whosoever truly admits the one never fails to admit also the other. Thus if it should please God to aid us, one of the principal objections which the world raises against the Gospel will be removed.

I say, then, that the law conducts naturally to grace. To convince you of this, will you consider the law with reference to four things, or four points of view which it offers to your contemplation? Its nature, its extent, its authoritative character, and finally, its sanction or guarantee.

If you consider the nature of this law, you will see that the question has little to do with ceremonies, customs, and external performances. Upon this point there is no difference of opinion. If these things were commanded by Heaven, they would doubtless

form a part of our duties. But the law, such as Christians and even pagans conceive of it, is the moral law, the law which subjects the life to the conscience. And this law commands us, not merely to act justly, but to be just; not only to do right but to feel right; that is to say, it demands our heart.

As to the *extent* of this law, a word will suffice; it is the law of perfection. He who understands it resembles that hero so frequently mentioned in history, who believed that he had done nothing so long as any thing remained for him to do. No relation of his life, no moment of his career, no part of his duty, can be withdrawn from this universal empire of the moral law. To obey in every thing, to obey always, to obey perfectly, such is the unchangeable rule of his conduct.[1]

In the third place, this is not a mere choice, a plan, or a calculation, on his part; he is bound to the law by the chains of an imperious and absolute obligation. In his eyes, the only thing necessary is to obey. Happiness, power, life, are not the end, but the means of fulfilling the moral law. The question with him is not about enjoyment, or power, or life, but about obedience. The laws of nature may change, those of duty remain. The universe may dissolve, the moral law continues. In the confusion of all things, and amid universal disorder, the will to do right does not cease to belong to him; and his activity would fail of its objects, and his efforts of their end, if he did not forever feel under obligation to be righteous.

[1] That this is a just view is evident from the fact that perfection, which is the absence of all sin, and the possession of all virtue, is absolutely necessary to our happiness. God cannot require less of his creatures than what will secure their permanent well-being. The spirits of just men made perfect, and the angels of God, are happy because they are holy. They "obey in every thing, obey always, obey perfectly." Hence we are enjoined to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Our heavenly Father then, has given us a perfect law, in order that he may secure for us a perfect felicity. He has forbidden all wrong, he enjoins all virtue; for all wrong is injurious, all virtue is beneficial. One sin, sanctioned or permitted, one virtue, neglected or not commanded, would tarnish our felicity, and introduce disorder into the divine administration. The law then is the law of perfection. It has no limits but those of possibility. It forbids all sin, it enjoins all purity, in thought, word, and deed. Like its author, it is "holy, just, and good," and therefore immutable and eternal. If, then, it bears severely upon us, if it condemns us utterly and irrevocably, this only proves that we need pardon and regeneration.—T.

That he may never forget it, a *sanction* is attached to the law. Happiness has been invariably attached to obedience, misery to disobedience. On earth, disgust, remorse, and terror, indicate to rebellious man the most terrible punishments concealed in the shadows of the future. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against every soul of man that doeth evil."

Try to deduct any thing from this formidable enumeration; try, and you will see, with each attempt, the burden aggravated by new weights. Say that obedience has its limits, and we shall ask you to point them out. Say that a compromise may be made between heaven and earth, and we shall demand, by virtue of what authority you dare to make such a compromise. Say that each man has his standard, and we shall enquire of each one of you, if he has reached that standard. Say, that God has no need of your sacrifices, we shall wish to know if the commandments of God are regulated by his needs; and we shall compel you to acknowledge, that on such a supposition, God would not command anything, since assuredly God has no need of any thing. Say that many of the duties imposed upon you are doubtful; but whence come the greater part of these doubts, if not from your reluctance to obey? Moreover, do you fulfil those duties of which you do not doubt? Say that obedience is impossible; but show us how, while you find it impossible, it yet appears to you highly reasonable; show us why your conscience persists in declaring authoritative a law, which your experience declares impracticable; show us why, after each transgression, you have in vain said, I could not have done otherwise; and why remorse does not cry the less vehemently in your soul. Remove this contradiction if you can; as for us, we cannot remove it.

To present to God our bodies and spirits a living and holy sacrifice; to devote to him our whole life; to seek nothing but his approbation; "to love our neighbour as ourselves; to use the world as not abusing it;"—such is a feeble sketch, a rapid outline of the divine law. Let others seek to efface, to obliterate the distinctive features; we shall deepen the impression. Let them seek to lighten the burden, we shall press it with all our might. We shall, if possible, overwhelm with it the presumptuous creature who seeks to shake it off, in order that, under the oppressive weight of this terrible and inexorable law, he may utter that desirable and salutary

cry which implores grace, and to which the Gospel alone has responded.

If, then, you have formed a just idea of the moral law, if you have accepted it, not enfeebled and mutilated, but in all its strictness and majesty, you will acknowledge yourselves violators of that divine law. You will feel yourselves capable neither of fulfilling all its precepts together, nor even one of them in a manner full and perfect; and in the profound conviction of your misery and danger, you will either abandon yourselves to an inconsolable despair, or you will cast yourselves at the foot of the eternal throne, and beg grace and pardon from the Judge of your life.

It is thus the law leads to grace. But observe particularly that I have not said that the law explains grace. The work of redemption is a mystery, and will always remain a mystery; the Gospel itself only announces it, does not explain it. All I meant to say is, that to him who contemplates the holy image of the law, there is an imperious necessity to rely on grace or perish in his sins.

It is at this point that St. Paul has again exclaimed, "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea we establish the law." This is the second truth we have announced; grace, in its turn, leads back to the law.

In the first place, you will consider that grace, as it is manifested in the Gospel, is the most splendid homage, the most solemn consecration, which the law can receive. This grace is of a peculiar character. It is not the soft indulgence, and the easy indifference of a feeble father, who, tired of his own severity, shuts his eyes to the faults of a guilty child. It is not the weakness of a timid government, which, unable to repress disorder, lets the laws sleep, and goes to sleep along with them. It is a holy goodness; it is a love without feebleness, which pardons guilt, and executes justice, at the same time. It is not possible, that God, who is the supreme sanction of order, should tolerate the shadow of disorder, and leave unpunished the least infraction of the holy laws he has given. Thus, in the work of which we speak, condemnation appears in the pardon, and pardon in the condemnation. The same act proclaims the compassion of God, and the inflexbility of his justice.

God could not save us without assuming our nature, nor assume our nature without sharing our misery. The cross, the triumph of grace, is the triumph of law. Penetrate this great mystery, and

you will acknowledge that nothing is more beyond reason, and yet nothing more conformed to it. Among all the inventions of men, you will seek in vain, for another idea, which exhibits in harmony all the attributes which compose the perfection of God.[1]

Thus, then, in the idea of evangelical grace, the moral law is

[1] To every unsophisticated reader of the Scriptures, nothing can be more evident than the sacrificial or substitutionary character of our Saviour's sufferings That Christ was sinless, all will admit; that he was treated as if he were a sinner; that he was thus treated by the appointment of God as well as his own voluntary choice, and that his sufferings were a part of a great scheme, devised by infinite wisdom, for the redemption of man, will also be acknowledged. Moreover, that he suffered for us, suffered what we ought to have suffered a thousand times over, but which we could not have suffered without utter perdition, and that God accepts his sufferings, not as a full or commercial equivalent for our punishment, but as an expiation or atonement for our sins, on the ground of which, our faith in Christ is accounted for righteousness, and procures for us pardon and eternal life, will scarcely be denied by any serious and candid believer in divine revelation. "He who knew no *sin* was *made sin* for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here then is the sinless suffering for the sinful, the innocent dying for the guilty; and if this be not sacrifice, expiation, substitution, we know not what it is. The case indeed is peculiar. There is nothing like it, there can be nothing like it, in the transactions of men. But the infinite Jehovah, the supreme Sovereign of the universe, the source and embodiment of all law as well as of all grace, may accept such a sacrifice, in place of the direct execution of his laws, and present it to the world, as his selected plan for the salvation of the guilty. Thus is he just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The fitness and efficiency of such an appointment are shown in its effects. *A priori* it might seem foolishness, but experience has proved it to be the power of God and the wisdom of God, not only for the relief but for the reformation of them that believe. Our author then is justified in speaking of the cross of Christ as an exhibition of justice and of grace. While it relieves the conscience of the sinner from the burden of guilt, and inspires him with an immortal hope, it strikes a death-blow at his sin, and penetrates his heart with gratitude and love. "A cold and sceptical philosophy," says Robert Hall, Works, Vol. I, p. 277, "may suggest specious cavils against the doctrines of revelation upon this subject; cavils which derive all their force, not from the superior wisdom of their authors, but solely from the inadequacy of human reason to the full comprehension of heavenly mysteries. But still there is a simple grandeur in the fact, that God has *set forth his Son to be a propitiation*, sufficient to silence the impotent clamours of sophistry, and to carry to all serious and humble men a firm conviction, that the law is exalted, and the justice of God illustriously vindicated and asserted by such an expedient. To minds of that description, the immaculate purity of the divine character, its abhorrence of sin, and its inflexible adherence to moral order, will present themselves in the cross, in a more impressive light than in any other object."—T.

found highly glorified. Why should it not be found equally glorified in the hearts of those who receive grace? How can we believe seriously, in that bloody expiation, without perceiving all that is odious in sin, vowing towards it a profound hatred, and desiring, if I may so express it, to do honour to that ineffable and unmerited grace? What! has Christ died for our sins, and can we love our sins? What! has Christ died because there is a law, and shall we not feel ourselves bound to redouble, and constantly to renew our respect, for the law? Human nature must have lost all its essential traits, all the fibres of the heart must have been broken, when the conviction of so great a benefit has failed to excite all our love; and it would be a strange love which did not produce obedience. He who says in his heart, "Let us sin, that grace may abound!" must be a man who has neither understood nor received grace; for the natural and reasonable conclusion is this, since grace abounds, let us sin no more! Thus, as I said, at the commencement of these remarks, grace leads back to the law.

I say more than this; I say that it alone leads thither. Of this you will have no doubt if you consider attentively what the law is. The law is not perfectly fulfilled except by love. But love is not commanded, it is inspired. The severest injunctions, and the most formidable threatenings could not create, in the soul, a single emotion of tenderness to God; love alone gives birth to love. Thus, as long as we have before us only the law with its threatenings, we do not fulfil it in the spirit by which it ought to be fulfilled, that is, we do not fulfil it at all. The Gospel has said that, "love casteth out fear;" it is also just to say, that fear casteth out love; for we cannot love when we fear. It is the privilege and the glory of the Gospel to give to the soul enlargement and freedom; grace being proclaimed, and fear banished, we dare love, we can love. "I will run in the way of thy commandments," says the Psalmist, "when thou shalt enlarge my heart." The heart opens and expands under the gentle warmth of divine love, and the sweet rays of hope. Obedience becomes joyous; it is no longer a painful effort, but a spontaneous and involuntary soaring of the renovated soul. As the waves of a river, once impelled in the direction of their channel, do not require, every moment, a new impulse to continue therein, so the life which has received the impulse of love is borne away entire, and with rapid waves, towards the ocean of

the divine will, where it loves to be swallowed up and lost. Thus perfect obedience is the fruit only of love, and love is the fruit only of grace.

This idea receives additional force, from a more complete view of grace. Grace is something more than pardon; pardon is only the inauguration of grace. God exercises grace towards us, when he forgives our sins; and he exercises it again, when he acts upon our hearts, to incline and form them to obedience; or, if you prefer it so, when he cherishes and perpetuates the first impressions we have received from his mercy; when he incessantly awakens in us the recollection, the idea, the feeling of these impressions; when he prevents the dust and gravel from obstructing the blessed fountain he has caused to spring from the rock cleft asunder by his divine hand. All this he has promised; all this he has pledged to us; all this, then, is grace. But what effect will such promises, such assurance have upon the heart, but to soften and encourage it? What disposition will he be likely to cherish towards God who knows not only that God has loved him once, but that he loves him always, that he thinks of him, provides for him, watches over him continually, conducts him gently and carefully, as a shepherd conducts one of his flock, from the mountain to the plain, bears him in his arms, and caresses him as a nurse bears and caresses a child; in a word, to borrow the language of Scripture, "is afflicted in all his afflictions?"[1] This, we repeat, is grace! Is it, or is it not, favourable to the law? In other words, is it adapted to develope, or is it only fitted to stifle in us, the principle of love?

Who, having considered the nature of the law and of grace, can now say, that law and grace are incompatible? The matter is beyond dispute. But we have a corroboration of this truth in experience. It fully confirms what reason has already proved.

In the first place, we affirm that those who admit grace admit also the law. Here, it is quite evident, we do not speak of that dry dogmatism, that dead orthodoxy, which is no more Christianity than a statue is a man. We grant that there is a way of receiving the doctrines of the church which leaves them without influence upon the life. But we speak only of those whose Christianity is vital, of those who have accepted grace, with the same feeling,

[1] Isaiah, lxiii, 14; lxvi, 12; lxiii, 9.

that a shipwrecked mariner seizes the saving plank which is to sustain him above the waves and carry him to the shore. Well, have you remarked, that those Christians by conviction and feeling, who confess that they are saved only by grace, have less respect than others for the law? On the contrary, have you not observed that what distinguishes them is precisely their attachment and zeal for the law? And yet, strange to tell! some have succeeded, by means of certain sophisms, in spreading the idea that the doctrine of such Christians is subversive of morality, that their faith is a pillow of security, that it extinguishes the necessity for good works, and opens the door to every vice. But their conduct has refuted all these sophisms. The flesh might say let us sin, for grace abounds, but the spirit teaches them a very different logic. It is true, they expect every thing from grace, but they labour as if they expected every thing from themselves. In the world we are surprised to see men, who long since have made their fortune, rising early and retiring late, and eating the bread of carefulness, as if they had yet their fortune to make. Well, then, those of whom we are speaking have also made their fortune,—they are saved,—they say so; but every thing which a man would do, who thus far had not the least assurance of his salvation, they do assiduously, and without ceasing. And they not only labour, but they pray; they supplicate the Spirit to sustain them in their feebleness; with fervour, they exclaim, "Oh, who shall deliver us from this body of death?" With the great apostle they repeat, "As for me, I have not yet reached the goal; but this I do, leaving the things that are behind me, and marching to those that are before, I advance to the goal, to the prize of the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus." In a word, the conduct of these disciples of Christ is such that it would be difficult to find among the partizans of the law a single individual as careful to bridle his tongue, to repress the risings of passion, to observe every *iota* of the law, and to fill up his life with good works. And yet they attach to none of their works the hope of their salvation. What proof can be stronger, that grace and law are by no means contradictory!

If it is true, that those who admit grace admit also the law, it is, unhappily, no less true, that those who do not admit grace do not admit the law. This assertion will not surprise us if we recollect what the law is, and what it is to admit it. Who, in the

elevated and spiritual sense we have given to these expressions, admit the law, who wish to do so completely? Not those certainly who reject grace. Every where among the children of the world the law of God is taken at a discount. Each accepts of it whatever he finds proportioned to his powers, and convenient to his circumstances; each makes a law according to his own standard. Morality changes its form and dimensions with each individual. And, what is especially worthy of notice, in this connection, is, that they make only those sacrifices to the law which cost them nothing, those indeed which are no sacrifices at all. But each appears to demand favour for every cherished inclination, for every reserved vice, for every idol he has not the courage to break; the avaricious man, for the mania of gain and accumulation, the sensual for the indulgences he cannot renounce, the vain for the distinctions by which he is flattered. In a word, behind conscience, and amid the deep shadows of the soul, each cherishes, perhaps unknown to himself, some idolatrous altar. It is this which explains the strange preference which worldlings give to the law over grace. Never would they prefer the law if they saw it entire; and they prefer it only because the delicate point, the wounding point, if I may so express myself, remains hidden from them, and only its flattering aspects, its smooth sides, its easy duties, are familiar to their minds. But with whom do you find this disposition to attenuate the law, or rather this incapacity to admit it? With the partizans of grace, or with those who reject grace? With the disciples of the world, or with the children of the Gospel?

But are there not, you will say to me, even among those who do not admit salvation by grace, men penetrated with the holiness of the law, and desirous of fulfilling it? Ah! my friends, you speak of a class of men very remarkable, and very interesting. There are men, I am far from denying, to whom God appears to manifest himself as he did to Moses on Sinai, with all the majesty of a lawgiver and a judge. By a celestial favour, which may be called a commencement of grace, they have felt the grandeur, necessity, and inflexibility of the moral law, and at the same time, have believed themselves capable of realizing it in their lives. Full of this idea, they have set themselves to work; now retrenching, now adding, and now correcting;—ever occupied with the desire of perfection, they have subjected their souls and bodies to the

severest discipline. But when they have seen that the task had no end, the process no result; when one vice extirpated has only enabled them to discover another; when, after all these corrections in detail, the sum of the life and the foundation of the soul were not essentially changed; that the old man was still there, in his ill-disguised decrepitude, that the disease of which they had to relieve themselves was not a disease, but death itself; that the great thing at issue was not how to be cured, but how to live; when, in a word, they have seen that their labour did not bring peace, and at the same time, have felt their craving for peace increasing with the efforts they made to satisfy it,—then was verified in them what Jesus Christ has said, "Whosoever will do the will of my Father shall know whether my doctrine comes from God or from man." "Yes, that doctrine which is nothing else than grace, they have acknowledged as one which proceeds from the good and holy God; as the only key to the enigma which torments them. They have embraced it with affection; they have sold all to purchase that pearl of great price;" and have thereby once more proved what we seek to establish, that "the law is a schoolmaster, leading to Christ; and that by the road of the law we arrive at grace. A great number of conversions which rejoice the church have no other history.

Thus, if there are among us those who have not yet resolved to accept salvation from God, as a gratuitous gift, as the price of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, I will state the reason of it, without circumlocution. It is because they do not yet know the law. They may speak, if they will, of righteousness, of perfection, and even of love; there are many things of a terrestrial nature to which they might apply each of these words; it is long since human language has rashly usurped the words of the language of heaven. But how far is that which they call righteousness, perfection, and love, from what our Lord has denominated such! Ah! if they had but the faintest idea and the feeblest desire of perfection; if the august image of regeneration, of the life in God, did but once shine upon their minds, what a revolution would be made in their ideas! how life would change its aspect in their eyes! how their views of happiness and of misery would be suddenly displaced! How little would every thing be to them, in comparison with that peace of God to which they did not expect to come but by way of

the law! When, after having panted, for a long time, under the iron yoke of the law, and traced in a field of duty, so many barren furrows, they should see shining upon them, at last, the divine promise, when the Desire of nations, the Desire of their hearts, should present himself before their eyes, with the touching dignity of Mediator; when he should teach them to breathe the gentle name of Father, which their lips could never before utter; when they should see the links of an ineffable communion, formed between their unhappy souls and the eternal Spirit, O then would they love, would they comprehend, would they accept that grace which to-day is to them only an object of scandal and derision. Open their eyes, O Lord, to the majestic splendours of thy holy law, to the sweet and tender light of thy compassion? Penetrate them with a reverence for thy commands, and then with love for thy love. Lead them by the road of the law, to the secure port, the eternal asylum of thy grace in Jesus Christ!

Note.—We would here say, what perhaps we ought to have said before, that in translating passages of Scripture, we have usually given the author's renderings, except in most of the texts at the head of the discourses.

X.

MAN DEPRIVED OF ALL GLORY BEFORE GOD.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."—Rom., iii, 23.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

THE two truths to which we invite your attention to-day have not met the same fate in the world. The first is not disputed; there is no one who does not acknowledge that "all men have sinned;" but there are few persons disposed to admit that "man is deprived of all glory before God."

There is such an agreement as to the first of these propositions that it would not be necessary to dwell upon it, if those who are unanimous in receiving it did not strangely differ from one another, and sometimes even from themselves, touching the extent and meaning of this declaration. Some of them regard sin as essentially a negative thing; that is, as an absence, a want, a defect; in their belief, no element of positive evil resides in the heart of man. Others, on the contrary, believe that sin consists in a direct preference of evil to good; that vice in man is not a weakness but a depraved force; that the will is not seduced but corrupted. You hear some explain sin as an accident of human nature; the result of the action of external circumstances upon the soul. Evil, according to them, does not proceed from the soul, but comes to it; the soul receives it, does not produce it. Again, you hear others maintain that the germ of sin is in the heart; that it seeks occasions to manifest itself; that every thing may become an occasion to it, and that man is not a sinner by accident, but by nature. The one, while recognizing, in the heart of man, a tendency to evil, regards that tendency as a primitive law of his being, an interior force, rivalling the moral element which gives it an opportunity of displaying its force, and triumphing, with so much greater merit and honour. The others maintain that God has not made evil;

that an adversary has come and sown impure tares among our wheat; and that harmony, not combat, is the regular and healthy state of every soul.

Reason sheds very little light upon all these questions. How many philosophers and profound thinkers have they not already completely defeated! Nevertheless, from all the intricacies of logic, and from the hands of sophists, one truth has always escaped, intact, entire, and invincible; it is, that men have sinned; that all, more or less, live in disorder; that, as long as they are in the flesh, they are enveloped in sin; and that, by an inexplicable contrast, they join, with the consciousness of their servitude or captivity, an irresistible feeling of guilt and responsibility.

As to a more perfect knowledge of the nature, the extent, and the consequences of sin, we shall never obtain it, unless we have recourse to the Christian revelation. This revelation does not confine itself to saying that all men have sinned; it throws a vivid light upon this declaration by the words which terminate my text: "They are deprived of all glory before God." To every one that adopts this second sentence, the meaning of the first becomes perfectly clear and precise. It is then to prove that man has no subject of glory before God that we are to apply it.

We have already said, that this declaration meets with more who deny it than the first. What does it, in fact, mean? It means that man has nothing in him which he can urge as a distinction in the eyes of God, as a merit or a defence; nothing which can, in itself, assure us of his good-will. Is not this truth disputed?

We by no means dispute it, some will say; for it is quite evident that all we are we owe to God; our good qualities are his work; and, in this view, the most virtuous man is included with all others in the application of this sentence: "They are deprived of all occasion of glory before God."

We admit it willingly, and the apostle himself would equally admit it. It was St. James who said to the primitive Christians, "Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights;" he alone produces in us both the execution and the will, according to his good pleasure. "What have we that we have not received from him; and if we have received it, why do we boast as if we had not received it?" But it is clear that it is

from another point of view that the apostle reasons in the chapter where our text is found, and that it has another meaning than the one which these persons would give it.

It is not merely a *homage* which the apostle would render to the author of every perfect gift; it is a condemnation he would pronounce. Upon whom? Upon man in every condition? No; but upon man unregenerate, upon man in his natural state. And the expression of the apostle evidently signifies that as long as man has not accepted the benefit of redemption by Jesus Christ, he is, with relation to God, in a state of reprobation, from which he has in himself absolutely nothing that can deliver him. This proposition, I believe, will find a considerable number of opponents.

We do not wish to burden this sentence with what evidently does not belong to it. We do not wish to confound two distinct spheres. In the presence of his fellow-man man is not absolutely without glory. Man can offer to man something to be admired and praised, or at least to be respected. Indeed, it would be to belie our own consciousness, and place ourselves in an untenable position, in all cases to refuse a sentiment of approbation to the conduct of our fellow-creatures. In other words, man is frequently forced to recognize in man something which he is obliged to call virtue.

Virtue he discovers and recognizes not merely in the Christian, whose moral nature has been renewed by the Gospel, but in others. Far from all admiration being confined to that quarter, the admiration of men, nay more, of Christians, is frequently directed towards the natural or unregenerate man. Whatever may be the harsh assertions of an ill-understood orthodoxy, it is certain that the Christian who is the most disposed, in theory, to refuse all reality and all value to human virtues, every moment contradicts himself in practice. A benefit received from one of his fellow-men moves his heart; he speaks of gratitude, he is, in reality, grateful; that is to say, he recognizes, in his benefactor, a benevolent and disinterested intention; he attributes to the action for which he has occasion to rejoice another value than the personal profit he derives from it, an intrinsic or a moral value. His benefactor is something else in his eyes than a tree, well planted, which bears spontaneously good fruits; he sees in him a generous will, which, without being incited from without, has used its capacity and

means to procure an advantage to a sensitive being. I know, indeed, that a narrow system may, at length, re-act upon the soul, and reduce it to its own standard, but it cannot tear from the soul those instincts so deeply rooted in it. And all that such a system can do, with reference to the essential nature of the soul, is to reduce it to silence, but not to stifle it.

In favour of the reality of human virtue, in some degree, we boldly invoke the testimony of all men, if not their express and voluntary testimony, at least that sudden and irresistible testimony which may be called the voice of nature. We shall obtain from them a testimony even more explicit than this, if we can, for a moment, induce them to descend into the arena where the facts wait to be combated. Of these facts we shall, without hesitation, abandon to them a great number. We shall consent to reject as far from the sphere of virtuous actions all those which may be explained by custom or prejudice; all those in reference to which, interest, gross or delicate, may have played a part; all those which the applause of men might or could follow. They may do with such actions what they please; we defend them not; our cause can dispense with them. But as to those in which virtue can be explained only by virtue,—those which have been performed far from the eyes of man, and without any reasonable hope of ever attracting their attention,—those which, so far from having been able to count upon their suffrage, had, in prospect, only their contempt,—those in which opprobrium could not be converted into glory by the enthusiastic adherence of a certain number of partizans,—those, in a word, which could never have existed unless there had been in the hearts of their authors an idea of duty or a sentiment of disinterestedness; all such they must leave us; and however small may be their number, and however widely separated by great distances on the earth, and by centuries of time, we believe that they sufficiently protest against a vain denial, and in their mournful rareness prove the presence and perpetual action of a moral principle in the bosom of the human race.

We have, in this cause, the Gospel itself in our favour. We see there the same writers who have taught us the entire fall and condemnation of man, unhesitatingly according to human virtues those praises which could not be accorded to them in a system which denies all moral value in the actions of men. It is true

All this proves that there is disinterestedness & humanity among men but are there virtuous?

they acknowledged that, in an elevated sense, there is none righteous, no, not one; none that doeth good, no not one; that all flesh has corrupted its way; but, after all, the same writers praise a barbarous people who received them, after their shipwreck, with much humanity (Acts, xxviii, 2); they return thanks for the affectionate care of a man, who, without knowing them, and without expecting any thing from them, did them all the good their situation required (Acts, xxviii, 7). And St. Paul, the very one who takes away from man all occasion of glory before God, acknowledges, in his Epistle to the Romans, that the Gentiles do naturally, at least in a certain measure, the things which are according to law, and by this means he shows, that what is written in the law is also written in their hearts. After these testimonies a Christian can have no difficulty in admitting a principle of action in man different from that of self-interest; and this principle being once recognized and defined, it is of little consequence by what name it is called.

Singular thing! it is among the followers of Christianity, and among them only, that our position ought to find opponents. And we see rising against it, in the ranks of those who oppose Christianity, as great a number of adversaries. It is sometimes against the natural man that we have to defend the reality of natural virtues. It is before man himself that man can scarcely find favour. It is man that refuses to man the occasion of glory which we have not hesitated to accord to him. The very same persons who tax Christianity with misanthropy and exaggeration, when it proclaims the nothingness of human virtues, are often, in the practice of life, the most sceptical of all virtue. They demolish, stone by stone, the edifice which they are eager and in haste to re-construct, when the question is agitated about finding a retreat against the overpowering assertions of the Gospel. Ready to defend against it, in general, the goodness, and even perfection of our nature, they contradict themselves, in detail, in a manner the most striking. To them all men are good, but each man is bad. Their distrust and caprice give credit to no action and to no man. Nothing beautiful or good escapes the corrosion of their cruel interpretations. They have in reserve for each good action a bitter and degrading explanation. When a beautiful fruit falls into their hands, their first idea is not to nourish themselves by it, but to find there the hidden worm which gnaws its interior. Thus their habitual practice belies

their theory. But what shall be said of those who admit into their minds two contradictory theories; of those who, reproaching Christianity with the harshness of its doctrines, have adopted, according to their own estimate, opinions as harsh, and perhaps more so; of those who, analyzing the human heart, flatter themselves that they have discovered (happy discovery!) that all its fibres vibrate to that of selfishness; who ask man to sign with them the sentence of his own dishonour, and yet demand a glory in compensation for that which they have taken away from us? There are times when this bitter contempt of human nature, this denial of all moral worth in man, becomes a general belief, and almost a popular instinct. This is seen especially at the termination of great and cruel deceptions on society, when having, through faith in its leaders, given its adherence to seducing theories, confirmed by imposing words, it discovers that it has been deceived, and in the disgust which follows its previous intoxication, includes in an equal contempt, all professions of faith, all protestations of benevolence, of justice, and devotion. The profanation of words leads to the contempt of things. In morality, as well as in religion, unbelief is the necessary re-action of hypocrisy. In the train of religious contests ordinarily comes religious scepticism; and wars of opinion, after an enormous expenditure of maxims, declamations, and protestations, end by giving birth to moral scepticism.

This kind of disgust which usually follows in the train of great social commotions, we produce at pleasure in ourselves, during quiet and ordinary times, by the general contemplation of society and the study of history. Those whom their individual relations might have led to accord some respect to humanity, in passing from individuals to the race, insensibly change their views. It is rare that in this aspect of mankind the conviction of the degradation of human nature does not fasten itself strongly upon their soul. A conviction so much more painful, when identifying itself, so to speak, with the consciousness of the whole human race, they feel on its behalf an immense remorse. The guilt of the whole human family is heaped upon their conscience, as that of an accomplice. Their pride yields in spite of them to this humiliating fellowship; because in view of so many transgressions, revealing, in their own heart, the hidden germ, from which unhappy circumstances might cause the same iniquities to spring forth, they feel

themselves condemned by the crimes of society, degraded by its degradation, humbled by its shame.[1]

This is not all. How, say they, confusedly, can generous juices circulate in a tree with that poisonous sap? And when, not only in the same nation, but also in the same individual, we see developed together the most ordinary vices by the side of the loftiest virtues, the most unnatural sentiments by the side of the noblest emotions, are we not led irresistibly to doubt the reality of good in the midst of so much evil; and, at the sight of these golden particles scattered in the mud, to suppose that this noble metal is not actually there, but that a singular play of light from above has, at times, given to some portions of the mud the appearance and glitter of gold? Let us examine, let us analyse, and we shall be surprised to see how many virtues are entirely false, how many actions, good in themselves, are dishonoured by an unholy motive, how many others by an admixture of impurity. Let us demand from ourselves an account of our admiration; by tarnishing the principle, we tarnish the object. Let us enquire if the enthusiasm we have

[1] If humanity is corrupted in the mass, it would certainly be very difficult to prove that it is pure in the details. If the race has fallen, surely individuals cannot be innocent. That there are among them diversities of character, some being better and some worse, at least with reference to certain aspects of character, none will deny; but that the taint of sin has, more or less, reached the heart of every man, all experience and observation go to prove. Even if an individual were conscious of some purity, ought not the very fact that he belongs to a degenerate race, to excite in him some suspicion as to his own integrity? Can he condemn the whole of his kind and acquit himself? Can he look upon the wreck of humanity and feel that he alone has escaped? Can he complacently say, Man is sinful, but I am holy; man is fallen, but I am safe? Impossible! For each man is a part of humanity, and must yield, in spite of himself, to that "humiliating fellowship." If he does not, if he separates himself from his fellow-sinners, and says, "Stand by for I am holier than thou," what estimate is formed of him by others, and even by those who are the greatest sticklers for the natural innocence of man? Do they not denounce him as a Pharisee or a hypocrite? And do they not thus recognize the truth of what the Scriptures have said, that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"? We cheerfully admit that man, though fallen, has a noble nature. It is a palace deserted. Enough of its primitive grandeur remains to prove that God once dwelt there. Its silence and desolation are mournful, but they are the silence and desolation of a majestic ruin, beautiful even in decay. Besides, the materials are entire, and may yet be reconstructed on a new foundation, and once more attract the presence of the King of kings.—T.

felt in view of great historical virtues was entirely pure, and if it had not for its principle less the love of virtue than the love of glory. Let us enquire if virtue, stripped of every poetical circumstance, reduced to the persevering but uniform, the zealous but concealed observance of duties which spring from a vulgar position, if virtue under such a form, and the less suspected on that very account, does not inspire us with an interest comparatively feeble; and if this be not a sentiment quite as moral as that which transported us from that dull and gloomy horizon to a dazzling one, where great achievements and mighty intellectual powers enhanced in our eyes the qualities of great hearts. If our admiration thus permits itself to be corrupted, will virtue itself be incorruptible? If glory has deceived our enthusiasm, has it exerted less influence on the great actions which awakened it in us? And must we not place to its account a part, alas! a very great part of the virtues we admire?

You see, thus, that if the opposition of one class of religious men gives a defender of human virtues something to do, the opposition of another class of opponents subjects him to no less embarrassment. For we confess, that after the knowledge of human nature we believe ourselves to have acquired, we should, to-day, find a difficulty, if we wished to do anything more than save a few remains from the wreck. For we believe in the wreck of humanity; we believe that its unfortunate ship has perished; the remains of that great catastrophe float on the waves. A few of these are yet fit for some use, but none of them can bear to the shore the least of the passengers. Convinced fully that man is fallen, we cannot, however, admit that he has become an entire stranger to every moral sentiment; we think we can see, through his corruption, traces—sometimes brilliant traces—of justice and benevolence, to which we cannot refuse our admiration; in a word, we believe that man is not stripped of all occasion of glory before man.

Let man be satisfied with us; we have done him justice. Let him surround himself with these splendid rags; let him admire them; let him try to clothe and adorn his nakedness with them; we agree to it; we go further;—we respect those rags, and we know why. But whatever high value he may place upon his proud indigence, what peace and hope can he derive from that incoherent and contradictory assemblage of the most extravagant moral elements; that will which acknowledges the law, yet tramples it

under foot, which loves duty and yet hates it; that heart which receives, with the same favour, and cherishes together, passions the most brutal, and devotion the most heroic? Will he persuade himself that all in him is good; or that the good can compensate for the bad; or that this mixture constitutes order itself, and that God wills the bad as well as the good? A craving for unity, stronger than all reasonings, appeals to him against it. An anguish stronger than all the consolations of a false wisdom repeats to him that there is no safety but in unity. A confused sentiment warns him that a good which does not conquer the bad is not the true good; and that a virtue which leaves a vice to dwell by its side is not true virtue; that true virtue, dwelling in the centre of the soul, would exclude, by its very presence, everything which is not virtue; that what he has honoured, under this name, is not then truly virtue, but its shadow, or its remembrance; while a voice of condemnation resounds hoarsely, during the whole of his life, above the applauses which by turns he gives and receives. Cruel doubts! Frightful shadows! What will disperse you? What will shed upon the close of this gloomy career a consoling light? The light which will illumine the past will illumine also the future; that which will explain the evil will also indicate the cure; it is under the ruins of our ancient dwelling that we must seek the foundations of the new. Unity, light, and hope we find all at once, in the word which has said to all men without distinction, "Ye are stripped of all glory before God." Let us together consider that great truth.

XI.

MAN DEPRIVED OF ALL GLORY BEFORE GOD.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."—Rom., iii, 23.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

IN a preceding discourse, we have said that man has some occasions of glory before man. Poor distinctions which he disputes to himself, and which, after a more attentive examination, he very often tears to pieces with a blush. Of what remains, of what ought not to be refused him, he cannot make a counterpoise to his misery; his shame, even in his own eyes, will always be greater than his glory. The general condition of humanity, even in eras of culture and in centres of civilization, always appears to him one of degradation and ruin. This is a conclusion to which he is almost infallibly conducted by a profound study of human affairs. It is a result also to which many good men are brought by the mere examination of their own hearts, and the rigorous analysis of their actions.[1] Such is the condition of man; such is his glory; let him take possession of it; but let him not stretch forth his hand to a higher glory, the glory which comes from God This we absolutely refuse him.

[1] It may be thought strange that while good men readily confess their sinfulness, bad men generally deny it. Sceptics, it is found, are ordinarily proud and self-conceited. But some of them have been compelled to confess their conscious weakness and imperfection. Few men were probably more calmly and proudly self-complacent than Goethe, who, with a clear and majestic intellect, had an irreligious and sensual heart; a fact of which he was not altogether unconscious. The following, from Eckerman's Conversations, p. 309, is an indirect but striking testimony to this fact. "It is from olden time," said Goëthe, "said and repeated, that man should strive to know himself. To this singular requisition no man either has fully answered, or shall answer. . . . Man is a darkened being; he knows not whence he comes nor whither he goes; he knows little of the world, and less of himself. I know not myself, and may God protect me from it."—T.

Already, by his own reflections, whether he form a moderate or an extravagant estimate of his moral worth, man is necessarily driven to acknowledge that he cannot pretend to much glory before God. That God, whose piercing eyes try the hearts and the reins can see there a thousand imperfections, which we do not see; and since nothing can corrupt his judgment nothing can induce us to hope that he will fall into the slightest mistake respecting us. Moreover, he is a God, perfectly holy, "whose eyes," saith the Scripture, "are too pure to look upon iniquity." When he sees evil in the heart, he does not receive from it those feeble impressions which we do. He has a horror of every thing which violates order; and this horror does not, like ours, attach itself exclusively to those actions which are more repugnant to our feelings than others, or which more sensibly disturb social relations. Far above such distinctions by the majesty of his nature, his divine impartiality attaches itself to the principle of actions; it is by their principle he judges them; and from this point of view he does not always mark, with a stronger reprobation, the enormities which appall us than the defects to which our blame scarcely reaches. His justice, all divine, by disarranging our classifications, raises all to the same level, and gives the name of crime to customs which do not cost us the slightest scruple. Not only our vices, but our imperfections, our pretended indifferent actions, frequently our very virtues, rush at his bidding to swell the ranks where already crowd so many obvious crimes. Judged by this holy and formidable Judge, even the good man is transformed into a criminal, and models of righteousness appear as models of iniquity. If it is thus that God judges us, and how can we believe that he judges otherwise, there is doubtless left us very little occasion of glory before God. But is it not possible for you to judge of this by yourselves by placing your minds, as far as may be, in the point of view occupied by your Creator? You can certainly do this, by considering the perfect law, where, as in a mirror, the divine perfection itself is reflected. The perfect law, or the law of perfection, has, in its application, no other limits than those of possibility. You need not consider it as a whole; take only one of its articles, that which commands us to do towards our neighbour whatever we should desire him to do towards us. I am not afraid that you will refuse this precept; no one refuses it. Those who do not wish to

hear us speak of Christian doctrine willingly receive Christian morality; they pride themselves on feeling its beauty; they exalt it above all others. Singular prepossession! For the morality ought to be much more offensive to them than the doctrine; the doctrine is consoling, the morality discouraging. But however that may be judge yourselves by this one article; for if this article be true, if it ought to be maintained in all its force, if it does not behove you to mutilate or weaken it, acknowledge that it condemns you. To treat your neighbour as you would that he should treat you! Such is the precept,—but pray, when have you observed it; or rather what day, what hour have you not violated it? This precept, you know, is not negative; it embraces all the offices, all the cares, all the devotion and ardour of charity. It supposes that he who would observe it shall not live for himself; that the welfare of his brethren shall become the principal motive of his life; that he shall include the whole world in his embrace, by the power of a generous love. Well, this positive aspect of the precept I will give up to you; and suppose, against all philosophical truth, that the negative part is independent of the other, and that charity may be confined to abstinence and omission. Thus, if any one abstain from doing to another the evil which he does not wish to receive from him, he is, by that alone, to be regarded as charitable. Well, have you, even in this limited sense, fulfilled the law? Do you fulfil it, when you use your *right* with rigour, and when no obligation compels you to use it thus? Do you fulfil it when you give your neighbour examples which it would be injurious to you to receive? Do you fulfil it when, without necessity, you wound his self-love you whose self-love is so sensitive? Do you fulfil it when you refuse him those attentions which you are yourself so eager to receive? Do you fulfil it when you judge his actions with an unfeeling severity, which you would not pardon in him, if he were to exercise it towards you? Of two duties, one, at least, is imposed upon you; either you must abstain from these things, or renounce whatever, up to this moment, you have required from another; you must either give what you have required from him or not require from him what you are unwilling to give him. Have you fulfilled this law? Have you not violated it every moment? Pass in review, in the same way, all the other articles of the law. Examine yourselves under the various relations it embraces. Hear

its decision; for it is as if God himself spoke. Then estimate your deficiencies, and see the ground covered with your broken merits, your prostrate virtues. You went to meet God, in pompous apparel, and with a magnificent train; lo! you have arrived in his presence with the double hedge of the precepts of the law; look now, on each side of you, look behind you! What remains to you of that proud train? Are you not alone, and without support before God, and reduced humbly to beg mercy from him whose justice you came proudly to claim?

I have said mercy, for without going farther, I can already say it. The law in fact demanded nothing less than its full observance; your conscience also demanded as much; for at each duty neglected, at each transgression committed, it failed not in a single instance to utter the cry of alarm. Even if you had fulfilled all its requirements, you must yet have placed yourselves in the rank of unprofitable servants. If, then, you have not been raised to the rank even of unprofitable servants, what is your position? And, to go to the bottom of the matter, what do you think of those frequent, those perpetual transgressions of the law, except that you have not loved it? For, if perchance you have fulfilled some of its precepts, you did so, because it happened to be agreeable to your inclinations, while the law in itself, the law as law, was hateful to you; and hence, if you have occasionally fallen in with it, you have never obeyed it. You will, therefore, conclude with me that you are rebels; that some acts of obedience, apparent and accidental, cannot remove from you that terrible distinction; and that mercy, not justice, is your only resource.

At this point it seems to us that we have said enough to reach the end of all Christian preaching, that is to cast the sinner trembling at the foot of mercy. But we do not forget what is the precise subject of this meditation. We have shown thus far, or rather we have ascertained with you, that man has few occasions of boasting before God. We must go still farther we must prove, according to the declaration of the apostle, that "all occasion for boasting is excluded."

To glorify himself before God! And for what? For having, whether in virtue or in vice, incessantly disobeyed him? For this is the crime which equalizes, among all men, all moral conditions. Other iniquities are individual; this is the great iniquity of the

human race. Virtuous or vicious, we have all excluded God from our thoughts, from our motives of action, from our life. We have all equally violated the first, the greatest of all obligations. We are all, in the same degree, transgressors of eternal order.

Let a man (I will, for a moment, suppose what is impossible,) let a man present himself to us, who can say, I have observed all the commandments of the law from my youth, only I have cared nothing for God. I have fulfilled my duties, only I have neglected the one which is most essential. I have been virtuous in every point, only I have committed the greatest of crimes. With how much propriety shall we say to him, you have not been virtuous at all; that is impossible. From the same source cannot spring sweet water and bitter. The same soul cannot contain elements so contradictory. The mind refuses to conceive an alliance so monstrous. And if you persist in calling *virtue*, acts which we admit enjoy the esteem of men, you compel us to affirm that such acts cannot constitute true virtue. Detached from the true principle of all good, they wither, as necessarily as a flower separated from its roots, and "the jealous God" can never honour a proud virtue which has never honoured him.

And let no one say that this is a dispute about words; that obedience only is essential; and that he who obeys the law and his conscience obeys God. If the one is identical with the other, if the one costs no more effort than the other, whence comes that universal repugnance to pass from the one to the other, from the law to the lawgiver, from conscience to God? Whence comes that inconceivable preference of the thing to the person, of the idea to its source, of the abstraction to the living being? Why will not man obey the voice of God except indirectly? Why obstinately refuse an immediate contact with his heavenly Father? If he respects the law as coming from God, if he honours conscience as the voice of God, whence comes it that God himself is not the direct end and object of his homage? The truth is, it is not God he honours in the law and in conscience, but himself. He appropriates these two elements and these two authorities to his own use, transforms them into his own being, and by adoring them as a part of himself, in reality adores himself.

What imports it, you say, that I neglect the lawgiver provided I observe the law? This idea would be admissible, to some ex-

tent, in our relations with the lawgivers of this world. They are but men, your equals, mere representatives of the justice and order, which a higher power has deposited in society. They possess no dignity, the source of which is in themselves. It is not thus with God; he represents no one. He is not the organ of law; he is the living law. The law itself is not law except as it comes from him. He is himself the supreme and final reason of all that he does, the supreme and final reason of all ideas. While it is the law which we honour in the person of the legislator, here it is the legislator that we must honour in the law. To observe the law without respect to the lawgiver is actually to violate the law; for our first duty relates to the lawgiver. To respect the ideas, and neglect him who is their author and source, who is the cause of their truth, and of whom those ideas are only the shadow or the reflection, is the most appalling of contradictions. To admit conscience and duty, justice and injustice, as realities, and to make an abstraction of the BEING who alone is the sanction of these ideas, who alone gives them a basis, who alone, binds the chain of them to a fixed point, who alone, we may say, explains their presence in the human mind, and renders them conceivable, is a profound absurdity. Finally, let us try to extend and elevate our conception a little. Let us transport it, as much as our feebleness will admit, to the idea of the God of Moses; of him who named himself I AM THAT I AM; of the necessary Being, the universal Being, say rather, THE BEING; of that God who is not an idea, a form, an abstraction, but BEING; of that living, infinite personality, who is essentially one; of that eternal ME, of whom the *me* of each of us is only a mysterious emanation; of that Being who is the source of all things, and constitutes our power, our breath, our life, nay, all in us which is positive and true.[1]

1 This is a sublime definition of God, but to say that the *me* of each of us, in other words, that which constitutes our personality, is an emanation of God, is liable to be misunderstood. If by this expression it is meant that the soul of man was created by God, without any reference to the mode of that creation, then it is true. But if it is meant to convey the idea that the soul is a part of God, a portion of his essence or substance, which has proceeded, or flowed out, so to speak, from his infinite *pleroma*, or fulness, then we deny it, as unphilosophical and unscriptural. God is a unity, an infinite, undivided, and unchangeable essence. He cannot be increased or diminished. Nothing can be given to him, or taken from him. He cannot,

After this, is there one of us who will dare to say that it is the law which concerns us, and not the lawgiver?

therefore, give off portions of himself; nor can these flow from him of their own accord, as rays from the sun, or streams from the fountain. That he has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that he can perform all possible things, and bestow all possible blessings, is cheerfully granted. But he cannot (with reverence be it spoken) impart any portion of his own infinite essence, he cannot divide or diminish, multiply or increase, what properly constitutes himself, his personality, or, as the French and Germans call it, the infinite and eternal ME. No creature, then, however highly endowed, is God, or a part of God. He may be made in the image of God, that is to say, he may be created a spiritual, intelligent, and moral agent; but he cannot partake of his essence or personality, which is equally incapable of division or multiplication.

God has the power of creation; an original and peculiar as well as mysterious and amazing power. He speaks and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. But to say that he creates by giving out portions of himself, or parting with his own essence, now forming souls of it, and now bodies, is assuming what can never be proved, and what seems to contradict our most necessary conceptions of the nature of God. For if God creates thus, then all spirits, and not only so, but all matter, is God. Every thing is God, and God is every thing. This is the idea of Pantheism. It is the very basis of the doctrine of an impersonal God, from which the atheism and impiety of "young Germany" are legitimately born. For if the premises be just, the conclusion is logical and irresistible. But the doctrine of Pantheism, whether it appear in the gorgeous dreams of oriental theosophy, the subtleties of Spinoza and Hegel, or the blasphemous ravings of Gutzkow and Heine, is neither, in its premises nor conclusion, the doctrine of the Bible nor of common sense. For while God is "in all and through all," he is above all and independent of all. The soul of man is a creation, so is his body, so are all souls and all bodies. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." "He said, Let there be light, and there was light." He said, "Let us make man in our image," and man was made in his image. But while the soul exhibited the image of God, it was neither God, nor a part of God, but a separate being, free and responsible agent, under law to the Almighty. "Our God made the heavens." "From him cometh every good and perfect gift." The God of the Bible, then, the God of Christianity, is a personal God, an infinite but independent Intelligence, a holy and ever-blessed Sovereign, to whom we owe the homage of the heart, the obedience of the life.

This is a subject of great importance, and cannot be discussed in a note; but we could not justify ourselves in passing it over in silence. Our author's views are, doubtless, scriptural and philosophical, but the expression in the text required this explanation. His definition of God is remarkably striking, and reminds us of Sir Isaac Newton's, which is the best we have ever seen. We subjoin it with a translation. The original may be found in Dugald Stewart's Dissertations, Part II, p. 105, Note.

"Deus eternus est et infinitus, omnipotens et omnisciens; id est, durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum. Non est æternitas

You place your Creator on the same level with a human legislator, and because the latter demands nothing more than obedience, you claim that God will not demand more. But in the divine Legislator do you recognize nothing more than a legislator? Is there nothing but the law between you and God? Is it the law which has conferred upon you so many means of enjoyment and happiness? Is it the law which has conceded to you the empire of nature? Is it the law which has formed between you and your kindred the mysterious and delightful union of hearts? No; in these immense benefits, one of which would suffice for the happiness of beings less privileged, the Lawgiver conceals himself, and the Father appears a father whose goodness transcends all thought. And you think that a cold and servile obedience can acquit you before him! You think that the power to love which he has planted in your bosom ought never to remount to him! That all your obedience should not be love! That your heart should not seek beyond the law and beyond the Lawgiver, the Father, the Goodness, the Love, from whom proceed for you, life, and even love and felicity! And you say coldly, unnatural creatures! We obey, —it is enough; are we not acquitted? And of that law which you pretend to fulfil, do you not understand that you have violated the first and the greatest commandment, by refusing to God love for love! No,—tell me not that in the law you honour the Lawgiver; unless, perhaps, he should be honoured by fear! Tell me not that your homage secures your felicity, unless, perhaps, a feeling, in which, in all its power, could not draw a demon from hell,

et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium sed durat et adest. Durat semper et adest ubique, et existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spatium constituit."—"God is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient; that is, he endures from eternity to eternity, and is present from infinity to infinity. He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite; he is not duration and space, but endures and is present. He endures always and is present every where, and by existing always and every where, constitutes duration and space."

What a comment on the I AM THAT I AM of Moses!

"Tell them I AM! Jehovah said
To Moses, while earth heard in dread
And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, O LORD, THOU ART!"

may suffice by itself to introduce you into heaven! The law practised in such a spirit, kills, does not save you.

You honour conscience! Indeed, I believe it. It would be difficult not to honour it to a certain extent. It would not pardon neglect. Invisible sting, planted by the side of the soul, the least irregular motion impels the soul against that hidden point, and inflicts a painful wound. But if conscience, after God had been exiled from the human heart, still remained there, it would be incessantly to warn it of God. But who receives that warning? You recognize the authority of conscience; you say that you have frequently heard it; but you ascend no higher. Thing truly inconceivable! Separated from the idea of God, conscience, in our nature, is nothing but a mockery, an enigma, a nonentity. Well, it is on this very footing that the greater part of mankind admit it. Indeed, you see some, to whom the idea of the judgments of God and a final responsibility is completely foreign, who at least reject it, and who, nevertheless, speak fluently of conscience as their internal guide; forgetting that if conscience has no one from whom it derives authority, and to whom it can appeal, if it does not deduce its power from God, it has nothing to say, nothing to command. Why is it heard? Why is it acknowledged? Because this is not a matter of choice. Conscience is in us; nor does it depend on us that it should not be there; absent, we cannot recall it, present we cannot deny its presence. But its presence, often otherwise unpleasant, and viewed with an evil eye, is not the presence of God. Conscience is only the permanent and indelible imprint of a powerful hand, which after having pressed us, is withdrawn from us, or rather from which a hostile force has torn us. The hand is gone, the imprint remains. That mysterious impression, which we have not made upon ourselves, leads the man who reflects, to a confused idea of God. It causes him to infer, and to seek after the absent hand; but, by itself, it cannot enable him to find it.

Would you have a sensible idea of conscience in man? An ungrateful child, impelled by infatuated pride, and seduced by evil counsels, escapes from the paternal roof to taste an independence which has been represented to him as the greatest of blessings. He plunges into the world, without means or prospect. His disorders and excesses, though they may not provoke the severity of civil justice, mark him, in all places, under his distinctive traits,

as a rebellious and unnatural son. But in the midst of his wanderings, something indicates that he is derived from a good family; in his language, a happy choice of expression; in his manners, something superior; in his behaviour, even honourable actions, which form a striking contrast with the general character of his life; in a word, a lingering something, which it is difficult to efface from the original habits of a man well brought up, accompanies him into all the places and all the societies where such merit is least appreciated. It seems as if we might expect every species of evil from a being who has voluntarily broken the heart of a father; and yet, quite often, when the seduction of example impels him to overleap the last barriers of honour, he hesitates, he draws back; self-respect appears to hold him still. Clinging to him, in spite of himself, the recollections of his first condition follow him, surround him, and intercept, on the way to his heart, a part at least, of the pestilential malaria which the world exhales, and prevents him from running from excess to excess, and from fall to fall, through all the possible consequences of his first crime.

Faithful image of man in his state of defection, conscience yet speaks to him. Sometimes he follows it; but as for Him in whose name it speaks, who has planted it in the bosom of man as a perpetual monitor, as a cry of recall incessantly repeated,—he hears him not, he serves him not, nay more, he abjures him; and yet he cannot be still, because, after all, he has, now and then, yielded something to the clamorous importunities of conscience! Ah! if he had always heard it, always followed it, the difference would not have been great, for it is not thus that God teaches *his* rights and *our* duty. Whatever may be the dignity of conscience, a dignity it borrows from God, God will not be supplanted by it. Far from yielding to it any of his rights, far indeed from abdicating his authority in its favour, as some appear to suppose, God, who will not permit prescription to be established in opposition to his claims, has sometimes commanded conscience itself to be silent before him. It is on the idea of his immediate right to obedience that many of the dispensations and decrees of the ancient economy rest. Indeed, if you look at that history as a whole, you see that while God, in general, respects his own work, by recognizing and even sanctioning the moral law, which he has written, from the beginning, in the human heart, you perceive also, that, as he occasionally inter-

venes by his power, in the working of miracles, without changing in any respects the combination of forces of which he has composed the universe, so likewise, in the sphere of morals, he imposes a momentary silence on the sensibilities of our nature, and even on our conscience, by commanding what these would not even have permitted. While Abraham is commended for having led his son to the funeral pile, in spite of the murmurs of the paternal heart, and Saul is punished for having obeyed an emotion of pity, and not committing what, on another occasion, would have been called an abuse of victory, do we not recognize in these two terrible facts a striking symbol of the truth which I advocate, namely, that God is above conscience, that it is to him our obedience ought to be addressed, and that his divine jealousy cannot be satisfied at a less price?[1]

Let us confirm these principles by an important consideration. It is, that obedience to God, I mean to God immediately, is alone capable of producing *virtue*. If recalling all that we have conceded in a preceding discourse, some should find in this assertion a contradiction as well as a paradox, they will give some attention to what remains for us to say.

Is virtue a word or a thing, a fiction or a reality? If it is a

[1] The procedure of God is ever in harmony with conscience and law. So far as these are perfect they are but an expression of the divine character and will. He may seem to suspend their action, as in the case of Abraham and of Saul, but the result shows that he was, all the time, acting in harmony with their fundamental principles. But as the law resolves itself into the will of God, and he has the sovereign disposal of life and death, he has a right to take the life of his creatures, or command it to be taken whenever he pleases. Still he will always act in harmony with law, that is to say, with his own nature. "He cannot deny himself." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But he must be judged by his own standard; he must be permitted to interpret his own doings. He has, therefore, only appeared, in special exigencies, and for purposes at once good and wise, to suspend the action of natural and moral laws; but he has never annulled them, never violated them. All has been order in nature; all has been righteousness in morals. If at any time his hand has parted the clouds, or laid itself upon the conscience of man, it has been done to show that he is infinite and supreme; that he is above all law and conscience; or rather that he is one with a perfect law and a perfect conscience, and can use them, as he pleases, to promote the sublime purposes of his providence and grace. Hence, to pretend to follow the dictates of conscience, or obey the law, independent of the will and authority of the Lawgiver, is truly "a profound absurdity."—T.

thing, a distinct reality, it must be *one* in its principle, *one* in its origin. If it has several principles, it is several things at once; it is an artificial assemblage of several phenomena, on which has been imposed a collective name, and the real nature of which remains by itself inexplicable. It must necessarily be admitted, that beyond filial piety, justice, benevolence, veracity, chastity, there is one thing which is none of these in particular, and which embraces them all at once; a principle, according to which we are not only respectful sons, or just, benevolent, sincere, or chaste men; but all this at once, *all that we ought to be;* a general power which must conform our soul to moral order in all its extent, and cause us to love it in all its applications; which, in a word, creates in us, not *virtues* but *virtue.* Does this word virtue, in its general or abstract sense, signify any thing? Is it a central fountain, of which particular virtues are the streams, a trunk, of which particular virtues are the branches? If you deny this, you are on the way to materialism; for it alone can solve your theory. If, on the contrary, you affirm it, point out to us this trunk, this source. The discovery of this original principle has been for a long time the task and the despair of moral philosophy. Will you seek for it in the conscience? From the conscience, in its actual state, you may derive some particular virtues, but their course, followed back, will not enable you to reach the primitive stratum, the original treasury, whence these waters flow. What is there, in the conscience of man, more general than that which we have already cited, "As ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them"? But how far is this from embracing the whole extent of moral being! How should such an axiom contain the obligation to purify the heart? How could you conclude from it the duty of rendering to God the homage which is his due? Vast as it is, it embraces not the half of our duties. And in practice, what deficiencies, what inconsistencies, would it not permit to remain! What, then, is human morality but a disconnected and fragmentary thing, even in the man who is the most distinguished for his character! In vain do you search there for the common principle of all morality. In a word, he derives from his conscience only some *virtues;* he cannot derive from it *virtue.*

Hence it is, that virtue ought not to be sought after any where below God, who is its supreme and only source. In fact, the love

of God is virtue. The power which produces in man simultaneously, as from a single fountain, all the virtues, dwells only in this sentiment. Thus it is, that in the production of this affection in the human bosom, the Scriptures make regeneration to consist. It does not teach us to be virtuous by successive additions, by placing one virtue, so to speak, side by side with another. It unites us to God by faith; and this faith, which produces love, developes simultaneously in the renewed soul all those qualities and habits the combination of which forms *virtue*. And it is because he plants that one germ in the very centre of the soul, and not at different points on its surface, that he attaches a sovereign importance to internal dispositions. The Bible alone has said, with a perfect knowledge of its cause, "From the heart proceed the springs of life." Social virtues, followed as an end, by the ordinary moralist, are in the eyes of the Christian moralist only the development of internal virtue, the sign and manifestation of its presence in the soul. Human morality, in its most perfect state, is only an ingenious mosaic, the least concussion of which makes it a heap of variegated rubbish; Christian morality is the mighty pyramid, every part of which finds the same support in its immense base immovable as the ground upon which it stands.[1]

With whatever pretensions man may approach his divine Judge, he cannot present himself with *virtue;* he has it not, for he has not the love of God. What glory, then, could he find before God?

[1] The materialists derive the idea of virtue from order, fitness, harmony, utility; and since the maxim of their philosophy is, *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu*, there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses; virtue, according to them, is a thing altogether outward and artificial, a matter of mere expediency, or of taste. The Spiritualists, on the other hand, maintain that it is innate and universal. Some of them would perhaps say, that it is reason in its highest state, or that it is God in the soul. This latter view, though an approach to the truth, is yet vague and unsatisfactory. Indeed, every one acquainted with the history of metaphysical enquiries knows that no subject has more completely bewildered and baffled the profoundest thinkers. But even if the nature of virtue were perfectly understood, the great question would yet remain, How is it to be produced in the human heart? Our author says that the love of God is its basis, or source; and he is unquestionably right. For this affection, the strongest and purest in man, placed on an infinite object is alone fitted to control the whole life. It then becomes universal, resistless, and inexhaustible. From its very nature, it renders virtue precious for its own sake, and dearer than all other interests. By enthroning God in the soul, it makes truth and holiness omnipotent and immortal.—T.

Acknowledge that all occasion of glorifying himself is excluded; excluded for the man whom the world despises; excluded for him whom it esteems. "There is no difference," says the apostle, "for all have sinned." Up to this point, the possibility of a difference may be conceived; but he adds, "and are deprived of all glory before God." Here differences disappear; for this sin, which is *sin* properly speaking, is the same in all. In this point of view the most generous man has a hard heart, the most just is unrighteous, the most honourable, unfaithful, the most loyal, rebellious, the most pure, adulterous; for every thing he has spared his fellow-men he has done to God.[1]

Do not suppose we are ignorant of all the murmurs, which feeling or natural prejudice may raise against this declaration. We might confine ourselves to replying that it remains true notwithstanding, and with an evidence stronger than all prejudices. But the consideration of an interesting fact will double, if it be necessary, the evidence already so great.

It would be natural to presume, that the more virtuous a man was, the less disposed we should find him to subscribe to the doctrine of our text, or at least to permit himself to be placed, in this respect, on the same level with a man decidedly vicious. I do not deny, that we might easily find, among honourable people, some specimens of this natural pharisaism. But what we often meet with among the noblest souls, and much more frequently among them than others, is a disposition to complain of themselves, and voluntarily to place themselves below those persons who, in the general opinion, are greatly their inferiors. May it not be that these noble spirits, to whom their very superiority may be the commencement of a revelation, perceive dimly, that in the midst of their amiable virtues,

[1] This, an objector might say, is to confound all moral distinctions. But if the author's premises are true, his conclusions are inevitable. If man is destitute of love to God, the fundamental principle of virtue, he is destitute of all true morality. His heart is corrupt, and his outward and temporary virtues are radically defective. They may be useful in society, but they do not unite him to God, nor fit him for immortality. He is condemned by the state of his own heart, with which the government of God is chiefly occupied, and must therefore be ranked with the ungrateful and disobedient. He needs, as well as they, to be forgiven and renewed. If saved at all, he must be saved by grace, as much as the Thief on the cross, Mary Magdalene, or Saul of Tarsus. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief (rebellion) that he might have mercy upon all."—T.

virtue itself is wanting? We go further: let these souls come in contact with Christianity. To whom, according to common notions, is it less necessary than to them? Have they not already, by virtue of their character, the greater part of what it can give them? Alas! many imagine it to be really so! But many more, and that is sufficient for our purpose, judge very differently. In the midst of their virtues, so highly lauded, a want, not of perfection only, but of forgiveness, and of grace, takes powerful possession of their minds; they confess frankly that they have no subject of glory before God. Speak to them of their virtues, they ask if these virtues prevent their life from being a continued course of transgressions of the divine law. Speak to them of the intrinsic worth of their virtues, and you will see them smile mournfully: for they know the defectiveness of these virtues, entirely human, and so far removed from every principle of religious obedience. It is not an easy thing to refuse the testimony of such men; it would be contrary to all good usage, to place more confidence in those who boast than in those who accuse themselves. It would be to suspect truth in a case where there is the least reason to suspect it, and to deny the wisdom of those to whom you have not been able to refuse it. It would be to admit that it is impossible that a careful examination of himself and the divine law may conduct a man of sense to moral views different from those of persons who have not made such an examination; in a word, it would furnish evidence of a superficialness which would not be pardoned in any other matter. I am persuaded, that a phenomenon like the one in question, at the very least, is worthy of the most serious attention, and that no one ought to set it aside, before he has explained it.

For us, if our opinion were asked, we avow that the madness of human pride amazes us. Man bends under the burden of his iniquities; horrors crowd his bloody history; an odour of death exhales from the bosom of society; the life of each man is, from his own confession, a tissue of transgressions, and, considered with reference to the claims of God, a long and persevering infidelity. Terrible assertions, none of which he can disavow. The Son of God comes to seek him in the depths of this appalling degradation. So long as that dishonoured creature can hear him, he calls to him, with the word of grace; he exhorts him to attach himself to him,

and promises that, under his guidance, he shall be able to stand without fear in the presence of his Judge. One moment!—cries the proud criminal,—one moment! Who hath said that I have need of grace; and on what grounds does he come to offer me that humiliating benefit? And my virtues, have they been esteemed? Is it pretended that they need grace? Must I drag, as suppliants, these noble companions of my life, to the foot of a tribunal where crime alone ought to appear? If my sins have need of indulgence, my virtues claim nothing but justice; and yet it is pretended to absolve them! Yes, it is pretended to absolve them, unhappy one, whom pride deceives! But what difference will it make? With them, or without them, you are condemned; midnight is about to strike; the Bridegroom is at the door! Is your lamp burning? Is your soul united to God? Are you his by the dispositions of your heart? Can you be happy in the society of saints, of Christ, and of God himself? This, this is the real question, the vital question; and in this solemn hour, when your terrestrial dwelling is about to fall upon your head, when a single moment only is given you to escape, you lose it by picking up some useless ruins, with which you cannot live, and by which on the contrary, you will perish.

Sinners virtuous, sinners vicious! hear once more the word of the apostle, "There is no difference, for all have sinned; both the one and the other are deprived of all glory before God."

But to sinners of every kind, to us all, to the whole world, the man of God cries in the Scriptures, "God hath concluded all in rebellion, that he may have mercy upon all." With him there is no respect of persons, no respect of sins; he stops not at some shades of difference; he does not apply to us our own vain measures; for the original crime is equal in all; and since he has included all in rebellion, he includes all in mercy. Labourers of the first, of the second, of the eleventh hour! nay more, ye who were not labourers at all, and who, having arrived at the fatal hour of midnight, having nothing to offer your Master but confusion and tears, there is room for you all in his arms. But you must throw yourselves there; you must seek no other aid; you must not expose yourselves to the malediction of the prophet, "Cursed be they who go down to Egypt for help!" That is, cursed be they who, refusing to be saved by pure grace, take refuge in the recol-

lection of their good works, their good will, their good intentions, or in a false pretext of a feebleness which they could not vanquish, or in the impious idea that God will pardon them at the expence of his justice! The amnesty is doubtless for all, for all equally; but it must be accepted just as it is offered; not as a right, but as a gift; not as an abandonment of the principles of the divine government, but as the price of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as a return for the ransom he has paid and the pledge he has offered. Such are the feelings with which we must come before that offended Master, who alone has a right to regulate and appoint the terms of the treaty which he will conclude with us. It would be to sanction and confirm the first rebellion by a second, to dispute about the terms of the treaty, to propose modifications of it, to cavil about the clauses, say rather, not to accept it with all the eagerness of gratitude and all the fervour of love. Weigh all these things, my dear brethren, and let those who feel internally that they are not reconciled to God, ask themselves without delay: Why do we hesitate to conclude with divine justice? Shall we persist, without a shadow of hope, in making common cause with rebels? Do we wish that death should surprise us included in revolt? Let the world insult our feebleness; there is no cowardice in capitulating with God. He is mad who would sell, to a vain renown for courage, the hopes of eternity! Unhappy he who can spend a whole life without loving and serving God! We are here, then, O Lord; take us to thyself, take us wholly; we would not live to ourselves, we would live only to Him who hath loved us first, loved us with an eternal love!

XII.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

"The love of Christ constraineth us."—2 Cor., v, 14.

A SHORT time since, one of those fugitive publications which are intended to offer daily aliment to the public curiosity called the attention of its readers to a new work, which ought, if we might believe the critic, to alarm all the friends of pure morality. That dangerous work developes an idea which shows how the doctrine, and perhaps the intention of the author, is corrupted, namely, that all the efforts of man cannot secure his salvation, and that he can do nothing to merit it. You will ask me what that book so severely criticised is. I know not, for it is not even named; but it might be the New Testament. For the New Testament also declares that man is not saved by his works; that the gift of salvation is entirely gratuitous; and that it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. And since the Gospel neither supposes nor admits of any other means of salvation, it clearly follows that no other means which we may attempt would conduct us to that result, not even the greatest efforts we could make to fulfil the will of God. Such is the doctrine in all its nakedness, I was going to say, in all its crudeness. What, then, must we do? As to the men who call themselves Christians, and yet censure these doctrines, it would, perhaps, be sufficient to reduce them to silence, by showing them that the doctrines they revile are the very doctrines of the Gospel, and that the church, for about eighteen centuries, has professed and proclaimed them as fundamental truths. But as these inconsiderate critics exhibit, besides a great ignorance of the contents of the New Testament, a striking want of reflection and of true philosophy, it may be proper to examine the maxim in question, as a simple idea, as a pure theory, in the light of reason alone. This is what we propose to undertake; and we hope that the result of this investigation will show that this doctrine is not only reason-

able and moral, but that it alone is reasonable, that it alone is truly moral.

And first of all, let us give a full statement of the difficulty which is presented to us. "A doctrine," it is said, "which teaches that we cannot merit salvation, which denies the sufficiency and consequently the necessity of good works, is directly contradictory to the idea of morality; for morality is the science of duty, and in the doctrine objected to there is no place for duty. Moreover, this doctrine contradicts the New Testament; for on all its pages it enjoins good works, while this doctrine excludes them." Let us meet this objection. And to those who urge it upon us, let us, in our turn, put some questions.

If there is a religious morality, that is, a system of duties with reference to our Creator, must we not possess some motive to induce us to practise these duties? It is admitted. Can there be any other motive than the two following, interest and devotion?[1] No, it is not possible to conceive of a third. Well, then, to these two motives correspond two systems, which we proceed to examine.

According to the first of these systems, every man comes into the world with perfect faculties, with obligations corresponding to these, and the expectation of a destiny suited to the manner in which he shall have used these faculties and fulfilled these obligations. Between God and him there exists a tacit contract, a reciprocal obligation. Man promises obedience, and God promises happiness. He that does good shall be recompensed; he that does evil shall be punished. This is sufficient to make us practise all our duties.

In this first system, then, interest is the motive proposed to us; an interest, doubtless, very elevated, nay, the greatest of all, but still an interest. But who does not, at the first glance, see how insufficient and defective is such motive? In the first place, this principle introduces into morality a foreign element, we may say a hostile element, since virtue consists essentially in self-sacrifice. This principle does not at first manifest all its hostility to the true spirit of morality. But let it work, and you will speedily see it subduing every thing to itself. It will soon teach you that it is the result which gives to actions all their value; that it is the net

[1] By devotion, *devouement*, the author means the disinterested love of virtue, benevolence, as some have called it.—T.

profit or loss which determines their essential character; that good is no longer good in itself; that it is good only as it secures happiness; and that vice is no longer vice in itself, but that it is vice only as it exposes to calamity. Promises have only to be attached to vice, and it will become virtue, threatenings to virtue, and it will become vice. Nevertheless, if morality is not a vain word, virtue, separated from its hopes, must still be something; and vice, separated from its dangers, must also be something. This is not all; for we must not forget that we are treating of religious morality; of duties which have God for their object; and that the first of all these duties, the only duty, properly speaking, is love. The law is not fulfilled except by love. But interest, carried to its utmost perfection, selfishness the most refined, can never rise to love. Under its influence a man may estimate the value of actions; he may make calculations with reference to the external life; nay, more, he may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned; but he can no more cause himself, by self-interest, to love, than he can from the collision of two pieces of ice produce the slightest spark of fire.

Disgusted with this wholly selfish morality, other minds have dreamed of a different system. They have absolutely excluded interest, and professed to cultivate virtue for its own sake. "Is not virtue," say they, "independent of the advantages it procures, worthy to receive our homage, and occupy our thoughts? Is it necessary for God, who is truth, beauty, goodness supreme, to encourage us by promises, to frighten us by threatenings, in order to secure our obedience? In serving him, we ought to blush to yield to other impulses, than those which result from his perfections themselves?

Well, who of us will venture to say that these are not right? Who will not heartily subscribe to this elevated system? But, on the other hand, who will realize it? This system is beautiful, it is lofty, it is true. It has only one defect,—it is impracticable. A truce to reasonings; let us speak only of facts. Where are those who serve God from pure love? Nay, where are those who love God at all? Let us not seek to deceive ourselves. Those fugitive emotions, which the thought of the Creator, or the contemplation of his marvellous works, causes us to feel, those superficial impressions, otherwise foreign to so many hearts, are by no

means love. If we love God only when we find our happiness in subordinating to him our thoughts, affections, wishes, nay more, our whole life; if we love God only when we lose our will in his; if we love God only when offending him appears to us the greatest, the only calamity on earth, and pleasing him the greatest, the only felicity; if we love God only when our heart places between him and creatures the same distance he places himself,—answer, ye who hear me, who is it that loves God? True, the worldling quite often exclaims, I certainly love God; nay, who does not love him? But nothing marks, with greater clearness, the estrangement of our heart than the audacity of this pretension. He who begins to love God is the first to be alarmed at his indifference to God. We love God!—ah! let us not rashly say so. When we shall cherish for him the tenth, the hundredth part of the affection, which we cherish for a parent, a friend, or an earthly benefactor, it will be time, perhaps, to say that we love him. Till then, let us be silent, and prostrate in the dust.

But if we do not love him, what becomes of that disinterested morality which we were right to prefer? What becomes of that refined system of which we were so proud?

It is true, that in the world, there are men who have set out to serve God. They have acknowledged that he had a right to be served; they have felt internally, their obligation to devote to him their life. But in what has that attempt terminated, except in proving that they did not really love God? The worldling, the frivolous man, might tell you, with confidence, that he loves God; but go and ask troubled and burdened spirits, who laboriously and painfully drag the long chain of the precepts of the law, go and ask them if they have that love in their hearts. Ah! it is not of love of which they will speak, but of fear, that is to say, of *interest* still. They will tell you of the majesty of the divine law, of its inviolability, of its threatenings. They will tell you that their sins are a burden greater than they can bear. They will tell you that instead of the Father they were seeking, they have found only a master and a judge; that his wrath has concealed from them his goodness; that fear has left no place for love, and that before loving they must hope.

Mark it well; before they love they must hope. And this is the method of the Gospel. It remains for us to develope it.

You have seen that interest is not worthy to serve as a motive power to our moral conduct. You have seen on the other hand, that an obedience based only upon love has no place in the heart of the natural man. Here, then, we experience a double embarrassment; we must discard interest, and produce love; but how discard interest, and produce love? The Gospel engages to answer these two questions.

Do this and live, the majority of moralists say to us; so also do the Scriptures of the Old Testament. That is to say if we regard the spirituality, the perfection of the law, do what is impossible, and live; do what is impossible, or perish.

It was necessary that such a morality should be taught in the world; it was necessary, also, that God should proclaim it in the old dispensation; it is still necessary that it should be preached in our days, among those who resist the Gospel; because the blessing must be estimated by the want, the remedy by the evil. Those who reject Jesus Christ must learn how far they are from fulfilling the conditions of their existence, and how much they need that the exigency thus created should be met by Him who can meet all exigencies, supply all deficiencies, in a word, by Him who only can create; for the thing to be accomplished is nothing less than a creation. In this very law, or morality, "is a schoolmaster that leads to Christ."[1]

But in the case of him whom the conviction of his guilt and impotence has led to Christ, a new order of things commences, a new morality springs up. The Law has said,—"Do these things, and live," but the language of the Gospel is,—"Live, and do these things." In the ordinary morality, obedience precedes and produces salvation; in that of the Gospel, salvation precedes and produces obedience.

Do you perceive that this simple transposition harmonizes every

[1] The apostle Paul describes Christians as "new creatures," or as the original reads, "a new creation in Christ Jesus." In another passage, he speaks of them as passing "from death unto life." So that the language of Vinet is fully justified by the word of God. Besides, does not reason itself corrobate this view? If man is not pure and virtuous, he is morally dead; in order then to live, he must be born again, that is to say, he must receive a new moral life. He needs two things, pardon and sanctification. The bestowment of these by the Gospel is surely nothing less than "a new creation."—T.

thing? We knew not what to do with interest, nor where to find love. Both of them find a place in this system, but in a new order, and in a new relation. Might I venture to say the Gospel expels our selfishness by satiating it, exhausts it by giving it every thing? It effaces *self* as its very first act. At the outset, and once for all, the greater part is given to interest, or rather the whole is given to it, every thing that can fill the capacity of the heart of men and of angels; eternal life, salvation, in the highest and most perfect sense of the word. The Gospel begins by declaring that we are saved, not by our works, but independently of them, nay, before our works. It relieves us of the intolerable burden, which caused us to bend under the obligations and terrors of the law. It gives rest and enlargement to the heart. It restores it to liberty. And of this liberty what use do we make? It is here the beauty of the evangelical system is seen. Joyful over his dissipated fears, happy on account of his deliverance, and tranquil with reference to his future fate, but, above all, admitted to contemplate God in the perfect manifestation of his love, confiding in God, whose goodness knows no change; in a word, conquered by gratitude, he is seized with a desire to do every thing for Him who hath first loved him, and given himself for him. "He loveth much, because he is forgiven much." Will he neglect the law? On the contrary, it will become to him more dear and sacred. But he will observe it in another spirit,—as the law of love, as the law of a Father and a Saviour. He will acknowledge that it is perfect, that it is sweeter than honey, that it restores the soul. He will delight in it after the inward man. He will practise it doubtless from a sense of obligation, but also from taste, from inclination, soon even from instinct; and he will observe it more and more, as it becomes dearer to his heart by the good fruits which it brings forth. It will no longer be necessary to say to him, In the name of your eternal interests, in the name of the terrors of the judgment, do this and live; because his eternal interests have been provided for, and the sentence which condemns him has been nailed to the cross. But it will be said to him, "Walk in good works, for which ye were created in Christ Jesus. Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are his;" or, as the apostle says in another place, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye

present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service."

Doubtless this fulness of confidence, this victorious assurance, is not imparted in the same degree, to all Christians; and if many possess it in the first moment of their conversion, others arrive at it only by a slow and laborious progress, while others, all their life long, rejoice with trembling. But observe two things particularly; in the first place, it is certain that in view of all those to whom it has been given to believe in the merciful sacrifice of the Saviour, God is love. They know, they feel that they are loved; they see that the designs of God respecting them are salvation and peace; and this conviction which reveals to their mind another God than is known to the world, also inspires them with other dispositions than those of the world. They loved that God who has loved them personally and tenderly; and thus it is that love becomes the principle of their moral life. Secondly, the Gospel, by incessantly declaring that their works cannot save them, by impelling them continually towards the idea of a gratuitous salvation, for ever urges them towards divine love, and forces all their thoughts to concentrate on that great object,—the compassion of the Saviour. With these persuasions, with this constant direction of the mind, it is impossible that the life should not become a life according to God. These Christians, then, do not form an exception to the position we have laid down. But this is not all.

Sincere faith is, in reality, full of hope. The individual who firmly believes that the blood of the new covenant has been shed for him, cannot be persuaded that He who has enabled him to believe, hath bestowed a gift illusory and vain. He cannot deny to himself the faithfulness of God. And if sometimes the ineffaceable conviction of his own unworthiness, the consideration of that law of the flesh in his members which fights against the law of the spirit, the view of so many deplorable infidelities in the bosom even of the church may, for a moment, obscure his hope, these very things make him recur with redoubled fervour to Him, who, finding nothing in us to make us acceptable in his sight, has been willing to save us through the faith which he has given. Do not imperatively demand from that Christian soul the triumphant assurance which the Lord has not made the privilege of all believers. He has it not, perhaps; but he loves; he has renounced all merit;

he expects nothing from himself, but every thing from his Father. I ask you, if he has not complied with the terms of the Gospel? I ask you, when he obeys from love, without hope in himself, without mercenary and sordid views, if that principle of Christian morality, the superiority of which we have endeavoured to establish, is a stranger to him, and if the occasional shadows which becloud his hope, in any measure detract from the system we have developed.

True, the Gospel speaks of a recompense, a reward, a crown. Here is only one truth; but it may have two aspects. It is quite evident that faith produces love, that love produces obedience, and an obedience which makes no calculation. But it is equally true that the works of such an obedience are good works; that such works lead to happiness as a necessary consequence; that God has not desired, and cannot desire the restoration of man without the design of rendering him happy; and that, in this view, the Gospel has been able, in God's name, to speak of a recompense and a crown. Thus, then, we find in the same truth two ideas, not contradictory, but correlative; faith given as a grace, and the fruits of faith as a recompense; the believer not labouring for a recompense, but God treating him as if he owed him something; salvation preceding obedience, since the cross, the means of salvation has preceded the works of the believer, and in another sense, that is to say, in the order of time, obedience preceding salvation, since the *full* enjoyment of the blessings promised to the believer does not commence till after he has finished his work. There is, then, no contradiction but mutual correspondence between the diverse declarations of the New Testament; and all the passages which it contains respecting the rewards of the faithful, cannot shake its great, its vital principle, namely, that obedience is the fruit of salvation, and that the believer obeys, not that he may be saved, but because he is already saved. Besides, what need have we to confirm all these ideas, when the facts utter a language so clear? Seek among all men who make a profession of Christianity, those to whom Christianity is real, vital, efficacious, those who have received the Gospel in earnest, and apply it with fidelity in their life, and ask them, in view of their good works, what is the principle of these works; and there is not one of them but will answer, I obey because I love; I love because God has pardoned me.

Even if the common morality, that, I mean, which rejects the doctrine of the atonement, should succeed in producing the same effects, the same works as the evangelical morality, the latter would no less possess a striking character of superiority; for as a modern writer has judiciously remarked, virtue in the one is but the means; in the other it is the end. In the one God is served as a mean of happiness; in the other he is adored for himself. In the one we cannot free ourselves from mercenary views; in the other we obey only from a pure and generous impulse. In the one it is servile fear; in the other filial reverence. "Having such promises, dearly beloved, let us perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." In the one there is self-interest, and consequently bondage; in the other all is love, that is to say, freedom.

After these reflections, it will be easy for you to appreciate the criticism which we referred to at the beginning of this discourse. You can judge if that is an immoral doctrine, which teaches that all our efforts cannot secure our salvation, and that nothing can be done to merit it. You know now that this doctrine is that of love; and of love in two senses at once, of a merciful love on the part of God, of a grateful love on the part of man. It is not a bargain, but a free covenant between God who has loved us first, and us who love him on account of his very love. What! is duty less sacred to us because we love him who imposes it? What! is the law the less acknowledged by us the more we acknowledge him who has given it? What! do we hate sin less because its expiation has cost the purest blood in the universe? What! shall we feel ourselves under less obligation to obey, because we cannot estimate all the immensity of the Father's love? Is a doctrine which doubles the weight of all duties, the force of all precepts, the pressure of all motives, an immoral doctrine? Is it not rather, as we said at the beginning, the best, the only good morality?

That the grace of God may be turned into licentiousness we are not anxious to deny. That such an insult to the majesty of God, to the majesty of divine charity, transcends all other baseness, every one will acknowledge. On this account it must be admitted that the greatest manifestation of the goodness of God has given occasion to the greatest manifestation of the wickedness of man. If God had found it necessary to prescribe the use of no other means than such as it would have been impossible for us to abuse,

we might not have fallen so low, that every thing reveals it, or rather we might not have fallen at all. The effects we have described we have presented as natural, and doubtless they are such, but not as certain in themselves; the will of God and the grace of his Spirit alone secure them. It is true, then, that many have abused them, and that many will abuse them; but those who abuse them do so to their destruction, while those who use them, do so to their unspeakable benefit. The latter have reasoned well, concluded well; the former have made a deplorable mistake; and in every case what cuts off all difficulty is, that while a small number only have accepted and fully understood grace, natural morality has never saved a single person, because it cannot regenerate him; while the dispensation we have explained, is the only one which has proved its efficacy to save the soul. That which changes the heart, which causes it to be born to a new life, which invests all obligations with a sacred authority, and transfers a religious character even to the slightest duties, which, in fine, elevates morality to the region of the absolute and the perfect, is the dispensation of the Gospel, and that alone. How far, then, how infinitely far from truth and justice are those who charge with immorality the doctrine we exhibit.

That doctrine which has been described to us in the nineteenth century, as a shocking paradox, is the same as that professed by all true Christians since Jesus Christ. It is the morality of St. Paul and of St. John, of Fenelon and of Pascal, of Newton and of Oberlin,—it is Christian morality. Salvation by faith is spoken of in your churches, and you receive that expression. Very well! this morality is nothing else than salvation by faith, or the recovery of the soul, by trust in the divine compassion; and how far will not this make the doctrine go back into the past? Under the ancient covenant, believers among the Jews already lived by this faith in the gratuitous mercy of the Lord. Ascending from one generation to another, you see them all drink of the water of this spiritual rock, which is Christ; you see Moses prefer the reproach of Christ to all the treasures of Egypt; you see this divine promise throw its pure and consoling light upon the mournful path of our first parents going forth from the shades of Paradise. This is the morality for which, during four thousand years, God prepared sick and fallen humanity; the morality whose majestic foundations, so

long prepared in darkness, the death of Christ has brought forth into the light; the morality of all future time; in a word the morality of humanity, which can sustain no other. O, if there is one among you, whom prejudices, like those which have given rise to this discourse, still keep far away from the Gospel, we conjure him to study the system of the Gospel, and after having admired its beauty, consistency, and harmony, let him ask himself the question, if it is possible for man to invent it? Let him ask himself, if there is not here more than a system; if there is not a fact, vast and divine, the greatest in the entire history of the universe? Let the cross become to him a reality, Jesus Christ a Saviour, the Gospel good news, an authentic message from heaven; and let him adopt this morality, alone worthy of God, alone adapted to our wants, and alone capable of regenerating our souls.

XIII.

NECESSITY OF BECOMING CHILDREN.

"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."—Matt., xviii, 3.

I HAVE sought, my dear hearers, in the preceding discourses, to render Christianity acceptable to your reason; I have constantly attached the chain of my arguments to the immutable principles of nature. I have appealed from yourselves to yourselves. I have thus, as it were, erected a tribunal before which the religion of Jesus Christ has appeared to be judged. What I have done, was, in my judgment, permitted to me. Preaching ought always to set out from a point admitted by all, in order to arrive at one which is not; with men convinced of the truth of Christianity, it sets out from the declarations of the Gospel itself; with those who are not thus convinced, it must set out from a point further back, a point which can be nothing else than some one of those convictions which are common to all our hearers, imparted by nature, or acquired by study. We have no regret, then, at the course we have followed; but we acknowledge that the attitude in which we have been forced to place Christianity, shall we venture to say it, of being accused by you, and defended by us, is not such as we should have preferred; and we have not been able to conceal from ourselves the danger both to you and to us, almost inseparable from such a method. By continually invoking the testimony of your reason, we had to fear inflating that very reason; and, on the other hand, of giving to the Christian revelation a false air of philosophical system and theory. We may also have given some occasion to believe that the work of conversion to Christianity is accomplished entirely by human means; that one becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ in no other way than he becomes a disciple of Plato; that in this marvellous transformation, reason and philosophy accomplish the whole; in a

word, that the proud thinker could make that long and important transition from the world to Christianity, without losing any thing, or yielding any thing on the way.

It is this impression which we shall now endeavour to destroy, if we have permitted it to be formed in you. Christianity, which has seen us patiently defending its rights before our petty tribunal, must, from this moment, assume the accent which becomes it, and dissipate the illusions you may have formed touching its position and your own. Have you thought, perhaps, that it sought nothing but your adherence, and, too well satisfied with having gained it, would leave you at rest, as after an affair amicably settled between it and you? Have you thought, by declaring its pretensions acceptable, by pronouncing, so to speak, its sentence of acquittal, you had done all that it required, and that its relations to you would continue on the same footing of equality on which they commenced? Assuredly you were greatly deceived. It must by no means, be concluded that you are converted, because you have yielded to the historical, the moral, or the philosophical evidence, with which it is irradiated in every part. That work, to take it in its true nature, is not even begun; all that we have said, and all that you have believed, is scarcely a preface to it; you have not yet read a single syllable of the book itself. The road to the kingdom of heaven has been pointed out to you: but you have not entered that kingdom. Such as you are naturally, you cannot enter it, for, says the Master himself to you, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Remember the reply of Archimedes to the tyrant of Sicily, who grew impatient with the slowness of his method or the difficulty of his theorems, "There is no royal road to science." With greater reason, we say the same to you, respecting our subject. Christianity does not offer, does not know, any privileged road. I acknowledge, that so long as you make enquiry touching the truth of the Christian revelation, the nature of these preliminary investigations is such as to leave undisturbed the sentiment of your independence and your dignity. This part of the route is wide; it has room for all your pretensions. Here you can enlarge and expatiate at your ease, and occupy it entirely with the sumptuous array of your science. But this road, however wide, terminates for you

and for every one, at a gate so strait and low, that far from being able to pass it, with all your magnificence, you cannot even enter it, except on condition of lessening yourselves, and exchanging, so to speak, the stature of a full-grown man, for that of a little child. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Is this the same as saying, that at the decisive moment on which depends an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, man is called upon to abandon his reason, to regard as null and void all the knowledge he has acquired, and that the childhood, which is made a condition of his admission, is nothing but ignorance and stupidity? Those who can believe this, forget that the New Testament every where supposes the contrary, and that the Christian religion includes in itself the richest source of intellectual development. They forget that from the very first it has rendered popular the loftiest ideas; that the apostles were not afraid to say to men already converted, "We speak as unto wise men;" and that in one of the epistles is found this remarkable antithesis, "Be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." 1 Cor., xiv, 20. A man in reason,—a child in heart,—such must the Christian be; such is the disposition with which every one must enter the kingdom of heaven. I suppose you to have the first; have you the second?

So long as you were only examining, in the pride of your reason, the evidences of Christianity, its records and its testimonies, every thing was allowed you which is allowed to full-grown men; you were required to be nothing else. But when, at the conclusion of these independent researches, your conviction has bound you to the doctrine of Christ; when by any means, you have acquired assurance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which each of you may well say, he is chief; when, to take a particular case, that great thinker, that subtle genius, that learned man, has ascertained that he has been picked up in the highways of the world, as an abandoned child, without protection, without clothing and food, without power to proceed on his way, or even voice to enquire the road, will it become him to affect the airs of a being of importance? And will he not be bound to confess himself a child, let himself be treated as such, become such in reality?

What, then, in the eyes of God, is he whom the world honours as a wise man? What is he but an ignorant one? What he that is strong among men but weakness itself? What he that is intelligent but a fool? What he that is rich but a pauper? Even if he should have discovered new heavens, or founded an empire on the earth, what is he in the eyes of God but a madman who has forgotten the first of truths; who is incapable of spelling the first syllable of the name with which the heavens resound, and which angels adore; who cannot fulfil, cannot even begin to fulfil the first, the holiest, and the simplest of his duties, and who with all his knowledge of nature, estranges himself so far even from nature, that he adores what he ought to despise, and despises what he ought to adore!

That which a little child is, with reference to the knowledge which such a man possesses, he is himself with reference to the knowledge of God. But that which a child has he has not. The child has, for all power, the consciousness of his feebleness; for all science, the consciousness of his ignorance; for all wisdom, the instinct which carries him towards his natural protectors. The man of the world has not this wisdom. He wishes, unaided to raise himself from the cradle, where he lies in his weakness. He wishes to find the road for himself, in a region of which he is ignorant. He rejects the hand which is held out to sustain him, and ever pre-occupied with his part as a full-grown man, he will not recollect that he is only a child.

This despotism, so natural and so common among those who are destitute of Christian convictions, is often seen perpetuated even among those whose reason has been conquered by the Gospel. They are ready, in their character of full-grown men, to sign the deed which acknowledges the Gospel, but they cannot persuade themselves to become children, that is, to become Christians. It is here they encounter the great stone of stumbling which their wisdom had not foreseen. It is here they stop disconcerted, as if caught in a snare. It was not with this in prospect that they embraced Christianity. They were deceived; they have been led further than they wished to go; they will not go back, that is henceforth impossible; but neither will they go forward.

They must go forward. They must put their heart in harmony with their intellect. Christianity is not a system out of us, but a

life within us. Christianity is a renovation of the soul; it is nothing less. A Christian is not a man who has expelled from his mind one theory, to give place to another. He is a man humbled; who feels that he can live only upon mercy; who adores, who blesses that mercy; who nourishes himself upon the promises of God as his only hope; who continually renounces himself, and devotes his life daily to the Saviour. He does not live himself, but his Saviour lives in him. And the life which he still lives in the flesh he lives by faith on the Son of God, who hath loved him.

It would be very agreeable, doubtless, and very flattering to his self-love, to present himself to the world as a man who, amongst all systems, had made his choice, and is ready to furnish evidence of his good judgment, by giving an account of the reasons which have led him to embrace Christianity as a system eminently rational. But the question at issue is a very different one from that of a mere profession. Look at a child. He not only does not blush to acknowledge his father, but he glories in it. It never occurs to the mind of this young creature that the father whom he respects is not respected by all. He places him in his estimation far above all other men. He yields to him respect and obedience in every place. Even in the one where his father is obliged to take a humble attitude, he perceives not that his father is not to every one what he is to him; or did he perceive it, he would be astonished and afflicted, and say so in sufficiently decisive tones. Ask from him who is yet only a philosophical Christian, these testimonies, these acknowledgments, this open and honest profession. Require him to declare, without embarrassment and circumlocution, and in all places equally, his exclusive trust in the blood of the new covenant. Let him place himself at the foot of the cross, humble, poor, and wretched. Let him, full of love for his Father, seized with admiration of that glorious goodness, feeling that nothing is great, nothing beautiful by the side of that divine work, give free expression to the emotions of his heart, and speak of the news of salvation as news always fresh, always interesting, news to which the attention ought to be devoted by choice, in the midst of all other news. Ask for all this, and you will ask in vain. He has not believed, in order that he might come to such an issue. He did not anticipate this. In truth, you astonish him greatly.

A little child has, with reference to the relations of society, views more philosophical than any philosopher. To him men are men. Custom does not, in his view, communicate to them any new quality. He loves them if they are good; he loves them if they love his father. In this respect the Christian is a child. He permits the relations of society to exist; he accepts social distinctions for temporal use; and frequently conforms to them, from Christian prudence; but his heart, internally levels all these distinctions. Christian love is the great leveller. He is not afraid to treat all men as brethren; for he sees in them the children of his father; and if there be any to whom his heart yields a preference, they are those who love his Father. The differences of rank not only do not arrest his love, but barriers more difficult to overleap, those which are raised by difference of culture, intelligence, and character, he scales with equal ease. He has always something to say to the simple, something to learn from the ignorant, some sympathy with characters the most diverse from his own. Neither weariness nor disgust accompanies him into society thus diversified. One great common interest brings all minds into harmony. Here all feel themselves equally learned and ignorant, equally foolish and wise. The differences which subsist in another sphere are not remarked. They are, with reference to the final aim of life, of but very little importance. Wherever the Christian meets a Christian, he finds an equal. On the contrary, nothing is more foreign to the Christian in theory. In order to form a common bond between him and the Christian, something more than Christianity is needed. There must be, if not equality of rank, at least equality of culture. He has nothing to say to the unlettered Christian; he feels ill at ease in his company; he dreads it. He must have similitude of views; a difference disturbs him. He cannot raise himself above the impression which produces an opinion so little rational. He cannot abstract himself from forms, to attach himself to principles, that is, to Christianity itself. He seeks equals and fellows, rather than brethren.

A little child can do nothing of himself; but he expects every thing from his father. He knows that he is loved by him, and that he will refuse him nothing that is necessary. He prays. The life of a little child is prayer. What reason has man to think and

to act in the same way? But to pray, says the wise man, to pray! That is not natural to my heart. Every thing indeed which can be said of prayer I know and hold for truth. But in spite of that, I do not feel inclined to it. It appears as if it were something foreign to me, an affair of another. I seem to myself so singular in prayer, as if I were doing something learnt or copied. Had I thought of all this in becoming a Christian?

A little child believes what his father tells him. It is his father! Does he not know all that a child needs to know: and would he deceive him? This amiable instinct is the instinct of a Christian. He knows what his Father has spoken; that is enough for him. He will not submit to the control of human wisdom, the authentic communications of divine wisdom. After having believed that the Gospel is from God, he will believe what the Gospel says. The Christian in theory is followed by the pride of reason even into the enclosure at the gates of which it ought to have stopped. He still wishes to judge, to choose, to adapt to his use, to prescribe to God what God ought to say, to reform the axioms of revealed truth, to re-make the Bible, after having accepted it. Do you speak to him of submission,—do you remind him that he has promised it, and that, at least, he ought to leave those mysteries undisturbed, whose inviolability he had previously acknowledged,—his reason, accustomed to enter every where, is surprised that any door should be shut upon it; he had never estimated the extent of his engagements. He begins to be vexed: and feeling at once the impossibility of receding or advancing, impelled by pride, retained by fear, he remains immovable and inactive, on the precise limit which separates Christianity from the world.

The passage from knowledge to possession, from belief to life, our Lord has strikingly represented by the figure, so singular at first sight, of a return from mature age to childhood. While in the world, the preceptor says to the child, Come, act like a man, Jesus Christ, our divine Teacher, says to the man, Act like a child. Be in heart, with relation to God and your fellow-men, what a little child is with reference to his father, and all the persons by whom he is surrounded. The infancy of the heart is the trait which distinguishes the Christian in fact from the Christian in theory. But that infancy of the heart, what is it but humility? What

distinguishes a child from a man if it is not a sort of natural humility? It is humility, then, which draws the line of demarcation between the Christian who believes and the Christian who lives. It is humility, then, which is wanting to the former, and which it remains for him to acquire, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Let us here explain ourselves thoroughly, and not give you occasion to suppose that one virtue is more than another the condition of salvation. Jesus Christ has only desired us to understand, that his religion is of such a nature, that if any one will not consent to humble himself, he cannot be his disciple. He might equally have said that no one can be such unless he love. He has said so, and his disciples have repeated it. But humility itself is a proof that one loves; he who loves has no difficulty in humbling himself: he who does not humble himself does not love. He who can see the Son of God descend to the earth, partake of our sufferings, degrade himself to the rank of a malefactor, and drink opprobrium like water, that *he*, a sinner, may enjoy eternal life in the bosom of the Father; he who sees this, and believes it, and still imagines that the disciple is more than his Master, and the servant more than his Lord; he who cannot persuade himself to drink one drop of the cup which Jesus has drained; he who cannot lay at the foot of the cross his frivolous pretensions, his independence of spirit, his confidence in himself, his petty glory, his vanity; he who pretends to rest upon a throne in the presence of Jesus bound to the stake of infamy, unquestionably does not love. And, on the other hand, he who is not affected by such devotion, who can believe in Christ without loving him, whose heart does not permit itself it be caught in the snare of mercy, he doubtless is not humbled. Principles which take each other's places by turns, love and humility, cannot exist separately in the soul. Go down into its depths, and you will find them united there, blended in a single sentiment, whose different qualities are developed together, by the same emotion and the same virtue.

But if reason tells us that the Gospel is of such a nature that we cannot receive it in deed and in truth without becoming children, reason can do nothing more. It abandons us in this affair, as in others, at the point where the true difficulty begins. Reason is

not the efficient cause of any of the emotions which spring up within us. All that it can do is to conduct us into the presence of facts; then it retires, and leaves the facts to affect and modify us. It is thus that it places us in the presence of the fact of redemption, a fact which includes this singularity, that however well fitted it may appear by its nature to touch our hearts, it yet meets there the most formidable obstacles. In theory, we say to ourselves, that in this fact every thing is so combined as to move the heart; in practice, it would appear as if it were only fitted to revolt it. Thus the Gospel does not ascribe to our natural faculties the power to believe in it, and appropriate it to ourselves. "No one can believe," it says to us, "that Jesus is the Son of God but by the Holy Spirit;" which doubtless means, that no one can, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, endue himself with the dispositions of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. No one, to speak after the manner of our text, can enter the kingdom of heaven except he be *converted* and become *a little child.*

Hence this transformation into infancy does not even belong to you. All that you can find in yourselves is the conviction that, proud and independent by nature, you must ask God to break down that haughtiness, to reduce you to the measure of little children, to give you their hearts. And it is not you, learned men, and men of genius alone, who need to ask this. Your pride does not surpass that of other men, as your talents surpass theirs. They too, in their mediocrity, are haughty and proud, for they are men; humble and modest, perhaps, with relation to men, haughty and proud with reference to God. Their reason makes no less pretensions than yours; their dignity is not less exacting; it costs them as much to abase themselves, as if, like you, they had their heads in the clouds. To be children, little children, to walk wherever they are led, unable to quit the hand which guides them, to depend on the divine mercy for the supply of their daily wants, to associate with the humble, to be seen in the company of little ones, to put themselves on equality with the poor in spirit, —what abasement, what disgrace! Happy, however, they who have accepted that disgrace, and covered themselves with it! The shame of earth is the glory of heaven. If it yet shocks you, if you are not yet pleased to become the children of God, know that,

notwithstanding your professions, you are not yet in the kingdom of heaven; you are on the threshold of a door open to your inspection, but forbidden to your entrance. You must beseech God to break to pieces your pride, by giving you a lively consciousness of your sinful state, a profound view of your misery, an implacable hatred of yourselves, such as sin has made you, and a solemn conviction of your danger. Tell him to cast you down, to put you so low in your own esteem that you may feel yourselves but too happy to be born again simple children, under the paternal hand. Then, not only will the religious convictions you have acquired profit you, but they will no longer be a burden, a care, an importunate thought, too oppressive, wherever you may drag it. They will constitute the foundation of your peace, the source of your happiness, a life in your life, a life in your death, your hope in time, your glory in eternity.

XIV.

THE CLAIMS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH ADJUSTED.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."—Col., iii, 2.

THIS precept, and a multitude of analogous declarations spread through the Scripture, are a subject of offence to many readers. They see in them the providence of God contradicted by his word. It is God himself that has placed us on the earth, and it is he who wills that all our thoughts should be in heaven. It is God who has placed us, by our bodies, our wants, and our faculties, in a close and necessary relation with the world; yet it is he who wishes to bind our hearts to eternity, by indestructible ties. It is he who admits of no division, no compromise, and proposes to us the choice between heaven and earth, as a choice between life and death.

Ought it to surprise us, say superficial readers of the New Testament, that, pressed between two opposing necessities, we should decide, after some uncertainty, either to throw our whole life into the future, or lose it entirely in the present? If some minds, struck with the instability of the world, hasten to flee from under the roof of a ruinous edifice, retire into the profound solitude of their own thoughts, concentrate themselves upon a single idea, that of eternity, and renounce the activity of social life, in order to consecrate themselves entirely to the care of their salvation; while others, abandoned to the influence of external impressions, spirits fickle, active, curious, governed by the instinct of sociability, and the charm of life, engage, body and soul, in the bustle of human affairs, and do not permit a single thought to escape towards the invisible world, and the things of eternity, we once more enquire, ought we to be astonished at it?

Alas, no, it is not surprising. We need not be astonished to see

the false reason of man corrupt and bend to its liking the simple doctrines of the Gospel. But if we embrace the whole of its teachings, we shall really find nothing in the Gospel which tends, even in the slightest degree, to the separation or divorce of our two lives, to the mutilation of our double nature. We are not taught there, that God, in giving us the Gospel, intended violently to rend our nature, and to place in competition two necessities, equally imperious. On the contrary, we are persuaded, while reading that divine book, that God has been pleased to establish in our life a perfect and unalterable unity, to form of the two principles of which man is composed a single being; not to destroy one activity for the benefit of the other, but to give to both one aim, and to the whole life a single significance; not to kill, but to regenerate man.

The anchorite of ancient times, the partially enlightened believer, who, in our day, would bring back the life of the anchorite, both misapprehend the design of God. If Christian perfection had required their retirement from this world, God would have made for them a separate world, where the wants of the body, the necessities of physical existence, and the engagements of society would never have disturbed the current of their serene contemplations. God has not made such a world. By invincible ties has he bound them to the world of sense, and the relations of society. He has compelled them to labour for their fellow-creatures, and their fellow-creatures for them. And no less has he demanded that they should labour for their salvation.

Indeed, our situation would be favourable, and our task easy, if it were only necessary to leave society, in order to find God; if God did not permit us to breathe the dust of the arena, or to hear the noise of combat; if we could triumph without having fought; if religion consisted not in overcoming temptations, but in encountering none; if it were permitted us, in order to become saints, to cease to be men, and if we could cast far away from us *the noble burden of humanity*, as a great orator, in ancient times, expressed himself.[1]

[1] There was a celebrated people of antiquity (the Spartans), a part of whom had succeeded in subjugating the other, and causing them to accept the severest laws. The conquered and the conquerors continued to occupy

That the world, in its actual constitution, has its temptations, its dangers, and its snares, we are not permitted to doubt. That it is wise to shun dissipation, to avoid even useless agitations, to seek, as much as may be, the repose of a retired life, there to refresh the soul, and very frequently to enter the closet in order to examine ourselves before God, are maxims with which it is important to be thoroughly penetrated. The peaceful uniformity of

the same soil, and to form, as it were, a single people. But the difference of their respective positions showed itself in the difference of their employments. The conquerors aimed to arrive, as a people, at an ideal and unexampled perfection. Consequently military exercises, the strictest order, privations the most painful, became the foundation of their life. None of the members of this association were permitted to go beyond the bounds of the republic, nor was a stranger allowed to penetrate within that sacred territory. It might be called a military monastery, subjected to the strictest rules. But as it was necessary, after all, in the midst of this sublime discipline, to live, the vanquished race were charged with providing for this. On them was imposed the vulgar but indispensable task of cultivating the earth, of exercising trades, in a word, of supplying all the material wants, which even the loftiest spirits cannot hinder themselves from feeling. Thus, on the one side, improvement; on the other, labour; on the one, intellectual and moral life, on the other, material life and mechanical employments; on the one, a polity almost become a species of religion, on the other, industry without liberty, and very nearly without thought. Such was the organization of that strange people. This state of things is a feeble image; still it is an image of the system we oppose. In fact, this system divides mankind into two classes, two communities; the first of whom save their souls by withdrawing from the obligations of society, while the others destroy their souls by submitting to them. The former seek the food which endureth to life eternal, the latter ruin themselves by seeking the food that perisheth. And, finally, what is not only strange, but abominable, the one class labour, at the expense of their salvation, that the other may be at liberty to secure it; for in the end it comes to this. However spiritual some may be, they have bodies, temporal interests, and families. They need the products of nature to feed them, the products of art to clothe them, laws to live in peace, and a government to protect them; and all these wants, reducing them only to strict necessity, suppose a development of knowledge,—a mass of studies, of which it is difficult, at first sight, to form an idea. The possession of so much of these gross and absolutely necessary commodities as would be sufficient to render the return of famine impossible, attaches itself, as all will admit, to the highest speculations of science, and to the most ingenious inventions of the arts. So that, since it is impossible to live without food, without clothing and laws, it would be absolutely necessary, in the system under consideration, that one part of the human family must destroy their souls in order to secure the existence of those which are saved.

the pastoral life did not excuse Abraham from seeking a place favourable to prayer, under the shade of the oaks of Mamre. How often did our Saviour himself retire to the mountain in order to elevate his pure spirit to his Father and ours. But in the same degree that these precautions are conformed to Christian wisdom, so is the idea chimerical, that all that we have to do to flee from the world is to avoid contact with society.

Vain hope! in the heart of deserts and in the deepest solitudes we may yet find the world. It is not met with altogether in the hurry of business, or in the agitations of society. It lies in the depths of our heart. The world consists of our passions, which solitude does not extinguish, and to which it sometimes lends fresh energy. All the evils and troubles of life do not come, to borrow the expression of a great philosopher, "from not being able to remain in our chamber." They come from our not being able to escape from our natural corruption; a corruption which follows us to the recesses of forests and of deserts, as it accompanies us into the streets and squares of our cities; whilst, in the midst of the most complicated and difficult business, in the anxiety even of high functions, the Christian finds in his heart a solitude, a tranquil world, a retreat more inaccessible than that of his closet, where he lives by his soul, while his body is given to a thousand cares, where his spirit peacefully composes itself, even when his person seems to be diffused and dissipated. Many a hermit lives in the world; many a man of the world lives in solitude.

To renounce the necessities of our earthly sojourn, to regard all temporal activity as perdition, is to insult the wisdom of God, which has imposed them upon us. What! could he create a world, the necessary effect of which would be to abuse himself? What! are nature, society, labour, the institutions of his providence, so many things he has cursed? On the contrary, is not the world, in the variety of its aspects and movements, a temple, all the parts of which are destined for his glory? What! do idleness, apathy, isolation, uselessness, alone honour him? Far from us be such a thought! It is not by remaining motionless in the heavens, that the stars celebrate his greatness and power, but by revolving swiftly in their immense orbits; and it is from our activity, from

the free and extensive development of our powers that God has been pleased to derive a part of his glory.

There are dangers in social life! Certainly, I believe it; they are such as to make us tremble. But God is doubtless not ignorant of this; it is not certainly for nothing that he has promised his Holy Spirit; or that Jesus has said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have afflictions; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Since it has pleased God to place us in these formidable relations, can we doubt that his grace provides for the exigencies which are his work? To believe otherwise would be to call in question the goodness and perhaps the justice of God.

Ties of family and of country, culture of arts and of knowledge, industrial and social activity, ye are the indispensable conditions of our existence; ye are the road through which we must pass; but ye are not the end of our being. That end is heaven. But the error lies in confounding the road with the end, the means with the result. The error lies in attaching ourselves to earth, which is the road, not to heaven, which is the end.

This distinction is conformed to our text. It does not say, Do not occupy yourselves with the things of the earth; but, Do not set your affections on the things of the earth. Act as travellers who give to their business all requisite attention, but are in haste to return to their native land. Act,—but for heaven; labour,—but for God.

Labour for God; because it is your vocation, primitive and unchangeable, your supreme duty, the first and last end of your existence. Alas! of all ideas, the most absurd is the most diffused. As if we existed by ourselves, we live for ourselves! Creatures dependent at every point of our existence, we have made ourselves our own law and our own object! Committing sacrilege every day, we conceal ourselves from our Creator! Oh! it is this that marks, even in noble spirits, the profound and general depravity of the human race. This is the seal of our reprobation, that we have forgotten why and for what we were sent into the world. All evil comes from this; and each particular sin disappears in this great and primal sin. Christians! I adjure you, by your very name,—live for Him who has loved you. He had infinite rights

over us as our Creator, but, by a miracle of love, he has added infinite to infinite. He has consented that righteous blood should flow for you. He has given up to the pangs of death, Him, in whom his own holiness was reflected, as in the purest mirror. At the intercession of his Son, his wrath was turned away from you, to fall on that Son himself; Christ became sin, that your sins might be forgotten. And now, thanks be to him, ye may enter, creatures degraded and defiled, race adulterous and dishonoured! ye may enter, "with everlasting joy on your heads," into the house of your celestial Bridegroom, to adorn yourselves anew with his glorious name, and to partake with angels in a destiny of honour and peace. After this, is it necessary to say to you, Christians, labour for God; attach yourselves to things above? Ah! if the name you bear has not told you all this already, all the words in the world will tell you nothing.

Work for God, set your affection on things above; because such an activity is the only one which offers to your energies an employment worthy of them. By acting only with reference to the world, what use can you make of those powers really proportioned to them? Whatever you do, you will always fall below your capacity, and a whole world thrown into your soul would not fill this abyss. You may fill up your time, by attaching a work to each of your hours, but would it fill up life thus to fill up its time? Life! Is it only a dimension? Is it merely a line without breadth, a chain which you must only take care to have unbroken? When every hour of a long life has been marked by an employment or a thought, does it follow thence that you have lived? O immortal beings, creatures, of God! life consists in the employment of all your powers; and you have divine powers. Life consists in the fulfilment of your destiny; and your destiny is heaven! Do not tell me you have lived, you who have a soul to aspire to the infinite, but which you have chained down to finite objects; a heart to love God whom you have not loved; an intelligence to serve Him, but whom you have not served. You have passed through life, at the side of those who lived, but you have not lived. To live, my brethren, is to perform a work which lasts. It is to accumulate something more than vain recollections. It is to convert all our present life into the future; it is to prepare for its death;

it is to make it, in advance, triumphant, glorious, full of immortality. To live, is to act on earth as a citizen of heaven.

But, at the close of our course, to be reduced to say, I have laboured, but have already received all my recompense. For a perishable work, I have received, from the world, a perishable reward. The world has my labour and keeps it. I have received its pay, but I cannot retain it; for I am about to leave the world. I leave it, with empty hands, with exhausted powers, with beggared spirit, and withered heart. I leave it, but I know not whither I am going. Alas! why have I lived? What business had I to live? Have I truly lived? Is it not a dream? Was it, then, that I should consume myself for nothing, that I was brought into existence by my Creator? Did I not feel something within me, greater than every thing I have yet seen, every thing I have yet felt, every thing I have yet done? Has not my soul urged me a thousand times, to take my flight above all sensible objects? Yet what have I done but to prostitute that soul to objects of sense, and to every thing which my awakened conscience, to-day, calls vanity? O deception, illusion, misery! O life lost! O spirit abused, dissipated, degraded by vain thoughts! O wretched past, without hope for the future!

I say nothing of the remorse which ought always to crown a life thus lost, but which does not always crown it. Last and painful blessing, or prelude and foretaste of the greatest pangs, remorse, we know, does not always assist at that solemn and mournful review which the worldling involuntarily takes of his past life, when about to die. Upon this last and terrible subject, supply what I do not say, and which no one can say but feebly. Represent to yourselves the busy worldling, arriving exhausted and panting, with the long chain of his miserable toils, at the foot of the eternal tribunal; and, penetrated with horror at the picture, you will no longer permit us to say, but you will say yourselves, Let us labour for God; let us set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

I am aware that some may say to us, "We cannot suitably care for the things of the earth, without taking some interest in them. We cannot succeed in a situation without a certain inclination for the things of that situation, nor in a study without a

taste for it, nor in any particular career, without loving it. Can it be believed that our interest in heaven can take the place of all these other interests? Can it be supposed that the mere sentiment of duty should supply a sufficient stimulus? Do we not, on the contrary, learn that the more we are attached to the things of heaven, the less fitness have we for the things of earth? What then becomes of that boasted harmony of which you speak?"

The objection has weight; and I wish no one to conceal from himself its force. It is certain that if we confined ourselves to contrasting two duties, that of being occupied assiduously with the things of earth, and that of loving only the things of heaven, we should only augment, instead of removing, the difficulty. But with a little attention, you will, I hope, see that the objection rests on an error. It consists in taking the words of the apostle, "the things above," in a too spiritual sense. The things above are not precisely those of another world, but those of another sphere than the habitual one of our thoughts. They are not the things above our heads, but those which are above our natural sentiments. The things on high are here below, if we wish it; the things on high are the dispositions of a heart renewed by the Spirit from above; they are all those sentiments, motives, impulses, which belong to a regenerated soul. To set our affection on things above is to set our affections on God himself; it is to subordinate our life to him; it is to seek and find God in every thing.

And what shall hinder any of you from finding Him in nature, the secrets of which you study with so much perseverance; in the functions you fulfil with so much interest; in that art you cultivate with so much ardour? Why! Is not God in all that is true, beautiful, great, useful? Is he not in every thing, except evil? Is not every thing which is good only himself? And in cultivating the different domains of nature, of art, and of civil life, is it not God himself with which the Christian is occupied; and in each of the things that interest him, is it not God also whom he admires and loves?

Loving God, then, is the secret which reconciles all. This is the secret of being occupied, with interest, in the things of earth, without ceasing to love the things of heaven. To love God is to love the life he has made, and the death he has ordained. But, ye

it is to make it, in advar dreamed of a compromise between heaven
tality. To live, is to ac ppeared incessantly tormented with fears
B[illegible] at the close ow the cause of your condition; ye fear God,
but ye do but have him. Piety, doubtless, also has its scruples;
but let us work, le not to confound the scruples of a delicate love,
which is afra[illegible] of not giving every thing to its object, with the
apprehensions of a selfish heart, which is destitute of the courage
to do one of two things, either to give himself wholly to God, or
wholly to the world. "Is this permitted; is this not permitted?
Is this worldly; is this Christian? May we see such society, form
such an enterprise, devote ourselves to such study?" This, in the
mouth of a son, signifies, How shall I keep my heart for my father?
But, in the mouth of a slave, How far can I follow the desires of
my heart, without irritating my master? Miserable and vain dis-
cussions, the principle of which it is easy to discover. What is
this perpetual bargaining between man and God? What sort of
a Christian is he who is perpetually occupied in minutely adjusting
God's part and his own, and ever filled with the dread of making
his own too little? What sort of a believer is he who pretends to
divide himself into two, the worldling and the believer, as if there
was no absolute necessity that the worldling should be altogether
a worldling, and the believer altogether a believer? What kind of
a man is he who has two hearts, the one for the world, the other
for God? What kind of devotion is that which makes its own
conditions, which keeps its reserved rights, which stipulates its in-
demnities? O, love is a better casuist. Love has speedily cut
the difficulty; every thing for God, nothing for self, is its motto.
Every thing for God, provided God is mine. Then let him enrich
or impoverish my life, let him extend or limit my activity, let him
gratify or oppose my tastes; if I have my God, I have all things
at once. It is him I wish to serve, him I wish to please; the rest
is a matter of indifference.

If you love God, you will easily and at once see what employ-
ments are incompatible with his service. The love of God will
endow you with a new sense, with a sure and delicate tact, by
means of which you will recognize without difficulty, the works
which please, and those that displease him; for all kinds of acti-
vity are not good. This is the first effect of the love of God.

There is another. It gives to the soul very great freedom. It renders legitimate a multitude of works, which could not be such without it. If you love God, you can enter into the bustle of the world, into the business of public life, into the culture of the arts and sciences; for all this you do for the glory of God, with gratitude and submission; all this leads you to God, instead of taking you far from Him; and, if I may say so, your courses which, in appearance, are the most adventurous, never remove you far from port. The most elevated functions and lowest offices, the greatest enterprises and the most petty details, the work of a year and the work of an hour, all are done for the Lord; consequently, all are permitted, all are good. But beyond this sphere, and without this direction, all is bad, even that which generally passes for legitimate and praiseworthy; all is bad for God is not in it. You can still be useful, merit and obtain esteem; but with reference to God, to yourselves, to eternity, you have done a work, vain, ungrateful, and wretched.

Ill-instructed casuists, whose delicacy "strains out the gnat, and swallows the camel," abandon, abandon the idle scruples which attach to some isolated actions, to some particular details of your life, and at once bring into question your entire life. It is of that life as a whole, of its general character, of the spirit which animates it, which it concerns you, before all, to form an estimate. It is not some good works, it is not a factitious virtue, laboriously studied, and laboriously imitated, which will prepare you for heaven. It is not upon this or that observance neglected or performed, upon such an action permitted or forbidden, or in itself indifferent, that the chances of your eternity will turn. Doubtless each of your actions has its moral value, its character, its colour; but each, also, is but the natural product of a principle, and in this respect has a character which, rather than its own, represents your moral value. It is this internal value which you must know; it is this also which God knows, and according to which he will appreciate and judge you. Do you know the standard by which he will do this? He will measure you by your love to him. He will enquire only about one thing, Are you his, by your heart? But his standard ought to be yours; and in this question,—Am I acting for God; is it my desire to do his will?—ought all your casuistry to be contained.

See, then, what wind fills your sails, and you will know whither you are going. Demand of yourselves an account of the sentiment which controls your life, and you will know what it is worth. Every one is able upon this point to give a precise answer; besides, here are two tests, the application of which will leave you no further uncertainty.

In the midst of the occupations and the cares which necessarily bind you to the earth, do you love to occupy yourselves with the things of heaven? Have you a relish for the word of God? Are you pleased to consult it, to elevate, by its means, the point of view from which you regard all your affairs, to stretch, as it were, over the limited horizon of your terrestrial life, the boundless horizon of eternity? Many, when they involuntarily bring these two views together, find no relation, no harmony between them, but rather, a sort of contrariety. The aspect of heaven, and of divine things, disturbs them in their labours; it deranges and disenchants them; it vexes and oppresses them. They could wish they had never cast their eyes in that direction; for that of which they had a glimpse has made them fear, for a moment, that their life, which hitherto appeared filled up so well, is, in fact, filled up with vanity. Thenceforward, they shun this view, and these reflections; and, in order to protect their labours from such painful control, plunge themselves wholly in the present. In proportion as that vision of divine things is weakened and effaced, they speedily resume their former ardour; but they are not active and persevering in the things of their profession, except on condition of caring as little as possible for their heavenly vocation. And yet they do not profess to renounce that heavenly vocation. They are entirely satisfied to have in reserve an asylum and place of repose; resembling in this the prodigal son, wandering in the highways of the world, it pleases them now and then, to think of their Father's house, but not to dwell there. They are pleased to believe; they would dread to lose their religious conviction; but they dread still more to see it become too strong. They fear those unexpected moments, brought on by God himself, when the truth of religion suddenly appears all radiant with evidence, and all powerful with reality. They dread that tyranny of a living faith, which would overturn their life, disconcert their plans, give another course to

their activity, and destroy the position they have assumed in the world. Frightened at that lightning, they hasten to shut their eyes, and, by a strange contradiction, dread both their scepticism and their faith. Brethren, do such people labour for the earth, or for heaven?

I have spoken of another touchstone. It is the thought of death. Let any one who doubts as to the legitimacy of his efforts, and the employment of his life, place himself in the presence of death. Let him with closed eyes, consider his last hour, that hour when, as it has been said with propriety, "There remains nothing with us but what we have given. Let him for a moment feel that he no longer belongs to the earth, that he lies upon his funeral bed, that he listens to that solemn warning, "Son of man, return, give an account of thy stewardship." Let him say to himself, that in a few hours, lying under the ground, he will be as much a stranger to what occurs six feet above him, as if he had never formed a part in the number of the living. Let him see vanishing, and becoming extinct, the splendour of renown, and the power of reputation, his personal influence, his property, his name and his memory; and proceeding to his last inventory, let him take account of what remains to him, that is, I repeat it, of what he has given. Well, has this activity, these labours and services, this fortune, or this poverty, been given, as it might be wished, wholly to God? Has he performed works which can follow him? Can he take with him into the other world, and lay down at the feet of his Master, all his labours, all his studies, all his life? Was it for God that he used his position, fulfilled his charge, cultivated his mind, increased his fortune? On which side was his life, apparent in the world, or hid with Christ in God? Is he about to be separated from every thing? Is he going to die, or is he going to live? If in the presence of this solemn thought of death, he does not feel his past life a burden which oppresses him, but as wealth which supports him; if the thought of the activity which is about to be interrupted does not inspire him with regret, but with hope, then that activity is good; he may yield himself to it without fear; for, in occupying himself with the things of earth, he labours for those of heaven.

This, my brethren, is what we would impress upon your mind,

and upon our own. No truth is more important. A moment will infallibly come, when it will appear evident to us; but we ought to anticipate that moment; for the same truth which is salutary to-day may be overwhelming to-morrow. Salutary while life yet belongs to us, overwhelming when that life is leaving us. If, then, our life needs to be reformed, let us reform it; that is to say, let us reform our hearts, "For out of the heart proceed the springs of life."

Reform our hearts! what an expression, my brethren! Ah! when the dead in their tombs shall be heard crying out, We live, it will be permitted to sinful men also, to cry out, We reform our hearts. To love God above all other things, to love nothing but in subordination to Him, to submit our life to a single principle, and our conduct to a single impulse, can this be done by a simple act of our will? Upon this point, let us consult our own experience. It declares to us our profound incapacity to displace, by ourselves, the centre of our life. Consult the experience of believers. They inform us, that it is by faith in a crucified, glorified Saviour, that they have found the power to do it. Consult the New Testament. It teaches us that in this great work, "it is God that produces in us the will, and the execution, according to his good pleasure." Let us not seek to deceive ourselves; let us not boast some external reforms, of which we have found ourselves capable; the reformation of our habits is nothing, without the reformation of our heart. Let us frankly acknowledge our weakness; let us ask, let us entreat, let us pray without ceasing, till assistance come, till our heart is altogether where our treasure is; till we are one in thought and affection with Jesus, till we have in our life but one aim, the service and glory of the Father who sent him. May the Lord shed upon us all his spirit of grace and supplication!

XV.

THE PURSUIT OF HUMAN GLORY INCOMPATIBLE WITH FAITH.

"How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?—John, v, 44.

GLORY! how beautiful is that word! How many hearts it has caused to leap! Is there one who, in all possible cases, can hear it or utter it without emotion! Primitive and indestructible tendency of human nature, the love of glory lives in all hearts, is found in all conditions, occupies a place in all enterprises, and may be compared to that wind, loved by mariners, without which the oar and the paddle would in vain fatigue a waveless sea.

Ask honest men, endeavour to reach the bottom of consciences more concealed, you will learn what power the presence, the expectation, the name even of glory exert over all those who are animated apparently by other motives. In the efforts of the patriot, the devotion of the hero, the perseverance of the philanthropist, the ardour of the philosopher, nay more, in the speculations of the man of business, the love of glory has almost always a place, and very often the first place.

"What!" exclaims that poor and obscure artizan, his brow all covered with the sweat of labour, "what! I pretend to glory! You may assure yourself I never cared for it." Yes, perhaps, when obliged to devote yourself entirely to the care of your subsistence, you had no thought but for the first necessities of life. Then that indestructible love of glory slept in your bosom. But the first wants appeased, how prompt it will be to awake? Do not deceive yourself. What is called glory among heroes, politicians, and men of genius, will, under another name, become one of your principal motives of action. What are the pleasures you expect from that money which your industry accumulates? Ease, do you

say, security, material advantages? It may be so, but to the honest, you still count among these the pleasures of passing for a rich man, and of securing that kind of consideration which is not easily refused to wealth. This, then, is glory.

There is in every soul an imperious want, a violent desire to add to its individual life, a foreign life, if I may say so, a life beyond itself, the seat of which is in the opinions of others. To be praised, admired, or at least, esteemed, is the secret desire of every human being whom misery does not compel to degrade himself to a lower ambition, and whom a profound degradation has not rendered insensible to the opinion of his fellows. We have, indeed, already within ourselves a judge, who is very indulgent with reference to our qualities and conduct; but this judge does not suffice us. It appears that, irresistibly driven to the sentiment of our nothingness, and dreading to be compelled some day to undeceive ourselves, we feel the necessity of appealing to other men to aid our self love, and of deriving from them an additional life, which we find not in ourselves. So true is it that this pursuit is derived from a consciousness of our weakness, that of all men, he who should seem the proudest, would be a man to whom, upon this point, his own opinion was sufficient.

Do not, then, deceive yourselves. Rich or poor, high or low, we all love glory. This craving for the esteem of others follows us as our shadow. It glides with us everywhere. Chased away under one form, it produces itself in another. From retreat to retreat, from corner to corner, it eagerly pursues its timid enemy, humility. Does she think she has escaped from it, she lifts up her eyes and finds it before her. The love of glory can find a place even in the tears and mortifying confessions of penitence. It secretly animates the voice of the moralist who thunders against glory; and sometimes, alas, it accompanies into the pulpit the preacher who condemns it.

We cannot deny, that, in a certain degree, the esteem of others ought to be a real want of each individual. In the first place, the privation of this esteem would divest us of a greater part of the advantages attached to the social state. What credit is to a merchant, good reputation is, in the same degree, to every member of society. In the second place, without some mutual good-will, so-

ciety would not be supportable, and good-will is inseparably connected with esteem. Besides, public confidence is the first condition of the good we desire to do. To be refused this confidence, would paralyze our best intentions. It is necessary, then, to obtain and to keep it. All this explains and justifies the natural sentiment which causes us to place a good reputation in the number, and even in the first rank, of temporal blessings. Under these various relations, it has a right to the same care which we give to our health; it has a right to such care, more especially because it not only bears upon our own welfare, but upon that of our family. I go even further; I acknowledge that, in the absence of Christianity, the love of esteem is one of the best things which can be met with in fallen man. In the absence of an object worthy of our homage, it is an indirect homage to those moral ideas of which society cannot divest itself, and is the best of those social elements which keep men united. But how different from this necessary care of a temporal blessing, for which we ought to give thanks to God, as for all others, is that pursuit of glory, from which we see issuing two very clearly marked characteristics. The first, that of making the esteem of men the rule of our actions. The second, of seeking in addition to a good reputation, praise, fame, celebrity. This is what our text condemns; the praise of men as an end of our actions, their approbation preferred to that of God, the glory which comes from men eagerly desired, the glory which comes from God neglected.

Remark particularly that my text does not only say, *ye love to receive glory from one another;* it also adds, *ye seek not the glory which cometh from God alone.* The glory, then, which comes from God only is a thing to be sought after. The following words of Jesus serve as a supplement to those which he uttered on another occasion: "There is no one who hath forsaken house, or brother, or sister, or father, or mother, or children, for my sake and the gospel's, who shall not in the present time receive a hundred fold." (Mark, x, 29, 30.) In like manner, there is no one who, for the love of Jesus Christ, has renounced human glory, who shall not receive a hundred fold from Him who required the sacrifice. In the kingdom of God, then, there is no sacrifice without compensation, and the compensations of God are infinite. In our souls,

there is no want he will not satisfy, but in his own way; that is to say, by giving us, instead of the gross aliment which our deluded hunger seeks, a purer aliment, which it knows not. We were born for glory. Well, he invites us to seek it. The same invitation is abundantly reproduced in the gospel. There, glory is represented as an object worthy of our pursuit, as the final recompense of our toils, as the price of the blood of Jesus Christ. The blessings of heaven are offered to those "who, by persevering in good works, seek honour, glory, and immortality."

Here, it is no longer man that praises man; it is no longer the wretched flattering the wretched; it is the human soul satisfying itself with true glory in the bosom of the God of glory. It is the Christian, expecting and obtaining from the mouth of the only witness whose regard he seeks, these noble and precious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will advance thee to many things." This is the glory which ought to be desired, which ought to be the end of life,—a glory we cannot dispense with without crime. It is the glory which cometh from God alone.

But as to human glory, Jesus Christ is so far from authorizing the pursuit of it, that he declares it incompatible with Christian faith. "How can ye believe," says he, "who love to receive glory from one another, and seek not the glory that cometh from God alone."

Indeed, this love of human glory is one of the principal quicksands of Christian faith. We can more easily and much sooner vanquish all other obstacles. When the soul, oppressed by the consciousness of its sins, and anxious respecting its future destiny, turns in the direction of religion, it meets, on its way, numerous enemies of its salvation. Proud reason is there objecting to the obscurity of the Christian doctrines, and urging it to reject what it cannot comprehend. Indolence dissuades it from the conquest of a kingdom, "which is taken by force, and of which only the violent take possession;" and sensuality makes it afraid of a chaste and austere life. But when all these perfidious counsellors have been successively driven away, human glory, more dangerous still, and more certain to be heard, presents itself.

If to believe were merely to recognize as true, certain facts and

doctrines of the gospel; if faith were only an act of the mind, in which the heart had no part, it would doubtless be impossible to see how the desire of human glory could hinder us from believing. But to believe in Jesus Christ is another thing; it is to receive, to choose, to embrace him, with all those qualities which are ascribed to him in the gospel. It is to submit to him our heart, our will, our life; in a word, it is to become the subject, the servant of this divine Master. But there is a disposition of soul in which, though the mind is subdued, the heart is yet undecided and rebellious. We desire to believe, and cannot; or rather we believe, and do not believe. As to conviction, indeed, we are within the exact terms of the gospel, but we are not within the gospel itself. We possess it as a treasure of which we have not the key, with which we can do nothing, and upon which we cannot live. "We have a name to live, but are dead."

I believe it important to insist on this singular state of the soul, because it is common and little noticed. There are among us, perhaps, few sceptics, properly speaking, who account to themselves for their scepticism. But there are among us many persons whose intellects believe, whose hearts doubt. Surprised themselves at the discordance which they observe between their opinions and their feelings, they seek for the cause, and cannot imagine it. If they had searched thoroughly, they would have discovered it in the illicit retention and guilty cherishing of an idol which they had not the courage to sacrifice. Ordinarily it is some unhappy bias which strikes their Christianity with paralysis and death; some forbidden thing, obstinately kept in their tent, which has caused the curse to rest upon it. This is the secret of so many half-conversions, of so much defective Christianity. This explains the character of those men, who, according to the remarkable expression of the apostle, "are ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth." It is said that when a mighty ship is on the point of being launched into the sea, when all is ready, when the last blow of the axe has caused the last support to fall, the spectators are often surprised to see the noble vessel remain immoveable on its smooth base; the curious eye seeks every where for the mysterious cause of this immobility; and in a short time a mere pebble is discovered under its keel, which resists the whole

force of that colossal ship. Do you, then, from whom the secret of your delay and irresolution on the way to truth has been concealed, search well, and in some unseen recess of the soul, you will perceive some favourite inclination, some inveterate habit, some passion ashamed to show itself, which, in its obscure retreat, opposes the generous launch which bears you towards the Saviour.

Let us apply this general observation to human glory, and set forth a truth which presents itself in the very commencement of the subject. The moral law is a law of perfection; this every one will admit without difficulty. But in order that the pursuit of glory should not prevent us from keeping this law, it is necessary that the being from whom we expect glory should be perfect in disposition, principle, and action. If he is not, he will not require from us perfection in return for his approbation, or as a pledge of it; for you may be sure he will not put his admiration and praise at a price so high. But more than this, he will with difficulty permit himself to be surpassed. Perfection, nay, the very tendency to perfection, will offend his jealous eyes. He will deny the necessity of this tendency, or rather he will deny the reality of it in your heart; he will misrepresent your intentions; he will call good evil, and candour hypocrisy. What I say upon this point, I do not say of this or that individual, or of any one in particular; for it would be absurd to pretend that no man would consent to find his superior in another; admiration and enthusiasm are tacitly involved in the confession of inferiority. I speak of the world in general, of its tendencies and its maxims. I compare its morality with that of the law of perfection; and I see that it is separated from it by an abyss. I recognize that in all times the tendency to perfection has cost those who have frankly avowed it, either repose or fortune, honour, or even life. Whence I conclude that he who desires the glory which comes from the world must descend to the standard of the world, by espousing its maxims, or at least taking care not to profess, I do not say opposite, but only loftier maxims. That we may leave nothing equivocal in this subject, let us reply to those who cite the universal enthusiasm excited by generous actions, and the spontaneous acclamations which greet the appearance of a great character, that there is nothing in such facts which

contradicts what we have advanced. That man has not lost the power of admiring moral beauty; that the poetry of virtue has a charm to him; that such bright flashes dazzle him; that even in the person of an adversary or an enemy, certain traits of veracity, fidelity, self-sacrifice, and mercy, irresistibly seize upon his heart, —who could or would deny? But I have spoken of the law; of the law which embraces all these virtues, but which includes them under the notion of obedience; of the law, which is to all such occasional manifestations what the light is to the lightning, of the law fulfilled, but not absorbed by love; of the law or system according to which man does not rise alone, choose his own virtues, consult his own nature, take his own impressions for a guide, or seek his own glory; of a law in which he subordinates himself to rule, loses sight of himself before the rule, and retains in the freedom of love, all the submission of fear, and in an intelligent fidelity, all the scrupulousness of blind obedience. Perfection is here, and no where else. It would not even be found in the practice of all the virtues, if these virtues were not united in one bundle by the tie of obedience. But is this the law of the world? Has the world received it? Can the world endure it? And if it is not in its nature either to receive or to endure it, does it reserve its suffrages and its applause for those who have made it their law? And the question is not, whether in the depths of the human conscience, this perfect virtue may not, in its principles, receive a silent homage; whether many persons do not internally, and so to speak, unconsciously decree the first rank to that virtue which they know not how to obey, but ever wish to obey. This I believe; but whence comes the applause of the world? For whom does it prepare crowns? For whom does it raise thrones? And, to present the same question in another form; if one who obeys the perfect law obtains its homage, on what ground does he obtain it? To what part of his being and his life is it addressed? Is it not to that which may be insulated and detached from the fundamental principle of his conduct? Is it not the natural man that they admire in him? Has the supernatural man, the new man, the man of God and of the law, any share in that homage? You know as well as I; you perceive without difficulty, that here the exception confirms the rule; and you will conclude with me, that

to secure the glory which comes from men, he must lend himself to their maxims, and proportion himself to their measure; that he must not surpass, that is, *humble* those, from whom he expects glory; and, on the other hand, in order to be perfect, that he must seek the regard, and be ambitious of the approbation of a perfect being.

Let us now descend from these general ideas to application and details.

How can the soul, which prefers the glory which comes from men to that which comes from God only, believe in Jesus with a real and efficacious faith? He has been compelled to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God; but the world refuses him that august title. Since the appearance of that divine Prince of humanity, the world has heaped opprobrium upon the adorers of Jesus. An external and formal adherence to him has been permitted in consideration of circumstances; but earnest and efficient faith has generally been exposed to derision. Is it, then, easy for him who values the opinion of men, to confess that divine Saviour, still spit upon and scourged as in the Prætorium, still crucified as in Golgotha? And must he not, in order to lie prostrate at his feet, have bid adieu for ever to the esteem and approbation of that crowd which reject him?

"He that says he believes in Jesus Christ, ought to live even as Jesus Christ lived." But how did he live? In a manner so different from received opinions, that it may be said that his religion is quite opposed to that of the world. For the world has its religion, wherein all the passions of the flesh are elevated into divinities. Here is pride; but we are to follow the steps of Him who was meek and lowly in heart: here is sensuality; but we are to conform our spirit to His who had not where to lay his head: here is independence; yet we are to resemble Him who came into the world to serve, not to be served; here is selfishness: and we are to be clothed with the dispositions of Him who gave his life for his friends. In a word, we must embrace a life, some of whose virtues please the world, because they are of use to it, but the general character of which wounds and condemns it. How can all this be done by him who cleaves to the approbation of the world?

How, for example, shall he use his Christian liberty, who is afraid that this liberty may pass for presumption and arrogance?

How shall he conform his life and his manners to evangelical simplicity who dreads to hear himself taxed with parsimony and meanness? How shall he persevere in the exercises of Christian devotion, who dreads to see falling upon his family and upon himself, some of those insulting epithets which ignorance and envy pour upon piety. A thousand considerations of this kind form themselves around him like a net, which binds and imprisons him. At every step which he wishes to take, he is held back by some new fear; vexed, he surveys, from the place he dare not quit, the course he ought to pursue; amidst a thousand emotions unceasingly repressed, and of repentings which exhaust the soul, he arrives at the tomb, without ever knowing the joyous liberty of faith.

And even if we did not risk a departure from the path of virtue, while following the attraction of human glory, such a pursuit would not be less incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel. In fact there is, according to the Gospel, but one rule of our conduct, the will of God; one glory to seek, the glory that comes from God. But suppose we prefer to that glory the glory that comes from men, and content ourselves with making common cause with them; we invade the eternal rights of God, so firmly established in the Gospel, by impiously erecting the tribunal of man at the side of, and even above, the tribunal of God.

The God of the Gospel, my brethren, is a jealous God; he is a God who will suffer no division, either in adoration or obedience. To seek our law any where but in him is to renounce our Lawgiver; to seek glory any where else is to renounce our Judge. And surely he must hold himself honoured by the rivals we give him! Worms of the earth, creatures of a day, poor sinners, equalled in our esteem, mingled in our homage with the eternal Jehovah, King of immensity, Sovereign of hearts, adorable Source of all holiness. The fickle judgment of a feeble intelligence preferred to the infallible judgment of the God of truth! Glory asked of shame, shame cast upon glory! For there is not even equality here; the creature is not equallized to the Creator; it is placed above him. From the very moment that the comparison is conceived, the outrage is consummated, the Creator is degraded below the creature; because in such an approximation, to hesitate is already to choose.

And who could imagine to what glory we immolate the rights of

our Creator! If it were a splendid example, if it were the suffrages of all people, and of every age, we should not be less culpable; yet such a thing might be conceived. But we do not seek so high for pretexts to insult God. On the contrary, we descend exceedingly low, to the very dust, to solicit praise. It is to the false tongue of a neighbour, to the smiling flattery of a wit, to the condescension of some earthly grandee, to the fear of ridicule, to the false customs of society, to some transitory fashion, to the pleasure of making a little stir in the circle of our acquaintances, that we wantonly abandon the dignity of the government of God, and the honour of his name. Behold the glory of man which we prefer to the glory of God! Certainly, my brethren, it would be difficult to enlarge upon this subject without a profound contempt of ourselves.

Conclude, then, that the pursuit of human glory, by hindering us from believing in Jesus Christ, or what is the same thing, from applying that faith, is incompatible with Christianity.

There is only one kind of approbation which can be sought without danger; in heaven, that of God, on earth, that of the saints. And we must not seek even the latter, except as a manifestation of the divine approbation. In general the reproofs of the just are of more value than their praises. Let us not forget those beautiful words of David:—Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a favour: let him reprove me, it shall be to me an excellent balm." (Ps. cxli, 5.) He has not spoken thus of the praises of the righteous.

And let none oppose to us such passages as the following, "Whatsoever things are of good report, think of." (Phil., iv, 8.) "Be careful to do that which is good, not only before the Lord, but before men." (2 Cor., viii, 21.) These passages, the true meaning of which is established by the general spirit of the Gospel, are authoritatively explained in those precious words of the Master, "Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in heaven." Here, not the creature, but the Creator is to be glorified. And the esteem of men is presented to the Christian, not as his aim, nor even as his encouragement. Let all the glory return to God, and then let him "give us of his own." Let God glorify us, if he deems it best. Such, upon this matter, is the sentiment of the true Christian. Our

doctrine, then, remains entire. The pursuit of human glory is incompatible with the profession of the Christian. He ought to be ambitious only of the glory that comes from God.

Brethren, if our object were not to induce you to conform to a precept, and to follow a counsel, but to acknowledge a truth, you have already heard enough. You do not need arguments to convince you that the approbation of God is alone worthy of being sought. For this purpose you have only, in thought, to pass the limits of time, and transport yourselves to the last day, and the tribunal of God. There you will see the value of human opinion. The glory of the world, formerly so dazzling in your eyes, will appear to you like one of those deceitful fires which rise from the marshes, and owe their pale rays only to the thick darkness of the night. That renown, which it is said, ought to pass through all ages, and levy a perpetual tribute of admiration from posterity, will appear to you no more than the puerile chimera of a vainglorious delirium. The infinite value you have attached to the opinion of your companions in trial, will appear to you an inexpressibly ridiculous blunder. Your immortal glory, as you are pleased to call the celebrity of a day, will be dissipated and absorbed in a glory truly immortal, the glory of God and of saints. You will there feel,—God forbid that it should be with bitter regret,—that these simple words of your heavenly Father, "Well done, good servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things," will dim the lustre of those pompous terms with which you have filled your panegyrics, wherein you have audaciously stolen the titles of the Creator to decorate a creature. "Well done, good servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things!" Who on earth contents himself with such slight praise? But in heaven, and from the mouth of Jehovah, such praise is of immense value; and never did adulation the most extravagant, enthusiasm the most intoxicating, fill him, who was the object of it, with a transport comparable to that with which these simple words can fill the glorified believer.

This, my brethren, is what you may say to yourselves. You may further say, that even on earth, the triumphs of self-love are vain and miserable; that they do not fill the heart; that they can only deepen more and more the immense and devouring void; that

the first effect of a triumph is to produce the desire for another; that changes of opinion are excessive and cruel; and that he is a fool who places his happiness at the mercy of that fickle and inconsistent opinion. You will say to yourselves that, when the craving for esteem and applause seizes upon a soul, it permits nothing good to subsist along with it; that there is no longer room for love in a heart which glory fills; that nothing withers the soul like this dangerous passion; and that it steals from us the purest pleasures and the noblest emotions of which the soul is susceptible.

I repeat it, then, that, if to be conformed to truth it were only necessary to know it, you might rely upon yourselves for the success of this discourse. But experience has proved to you the contrary. There are a thousand truths that have subdued your intellect, without controlling your life. Know, then, that this work is not yours, and that you will never save yourselves. Ah! you feel it, perhaps. To renounce the esteem of the world, to cease making it an end and a rule, and to seek only the approbation of God, is a miracle which belongs only to God to work in you, and which it is your privilege to ask of him. May you, then, may we all, ask it of him, with sincerity, earnestness, and perseverance. May we see forming in our hearts a holy tranquillity, with reference to the judgments of men. Freed from the heavy chains of opinion, may we feel ourselves free to believe, to love, to obey, till the day comes, when, delivered for ever from that importunate vision of human glory, we shall rejoice in the rays of a true glory, in the bosom of our God and of his Christ.

XVI.

POWER OF THE FEEBLE.[1]

"There are many members, but only one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, those members which seem to be the feeblest are the most necessary."—1 Cor., xii, 20-22.

"THE kingdom of God cometh not with observation." It was by these words, and many others like them, that Jesus Christ turned the attention of the Jews, from their accustomed prospect of glory, splendour and power, to that of the Gospel, composed as it is of far different aspects. But the friend of the simple and meek, the God of the poor in spirit, the Prince of the little and the feeble, could not make himself understood by a multitude of carnal Israelites, carried away by false greatness. The same thing happens in our days; his humility conceals him from our proud hearts. We voluntarily make a selection in his gospel, leaving to him the lowliness he has chosen, and taking to ourselves the loftiness he has disdained. And here I do not speak only of external pomp of which it is easy to see the nothingness, but of the splendour of certain spiritual gifts which distinguish a Christian, without the aid of external circumstances, and may appear to us worthy of our ambition. But it is not ambition, whatever fine name it may assume, which is favoured by the Gospel; and we find the proof of this in the passage in which St. Paul contrasts the various gifts which the Spirit of God had just shed upon the church, "There are many members, but only one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, those members of the body which appear the feeblest are the most necessary."

The day of Pentecost was, even to the carnal eye, a very great

[1] Preached on the anniversary of the day of Pentecost.

day. The mighty rushing wind, the tongues of fire, the miraculous gifts suddenly distributed among the apostles, and that extraordinary energy which made them new men, were doubtless all wonderful. Nevertheless, the festival of the Holy Spirit includes still greater things; and the Gospel, which to-day recounts to us the effusion of these splendid gifts, authorizes us, by the voice of St. Paul, to proclaim the superiority of some other gifts more obscure and inconsiderable in appearance, of which the Holy Spirit is equally the author. This is what we propose to do, to-day, while explaining these closing words of the apostle, "the members of the body which appear the feeblest, are yet the most necessary."

The Greek word rendered *feeble*, in our versions of the Bible does not, in this place, signify feebleness, properly speaking, but *inferiority*. The more feeble members are those less remarkable, or less distinguished. Besides, if the same word is used to designate two different ideas, it is because they have some relation to each other, at least in the vulgar opinion. It is so common, when one possesses power, to exhibit it, and even to make a parade of it, that a life, obscure, concealed, modest, almost always suggests the idea of timidity and feebleness. If this opinion is often well founded in the world, it is not so in the church; and it is the church which is referred to in my text. This body is the church, these members are the members of the church, and the more feeble are those who have received the less splendid and apparently less elevated gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such are the feeble members which Paul represents as the most necessary. But as the apostle has spoken, in the whole chapter, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, since it is with reference to these, that he distinguishes the members of the church as strong and feeble, we believe that we may present the idea of the apostle in this form. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are the most feeble, are also the most necessary.

The gifts of the first rank, I mean the more splendid gifts, are of two kinds. Those that are supernatural, such as speaking in unknown tongues, curing diseases, predicting the future; secondly, those that are natural, some of which relate to the heart, such as a triumphant joy, a faith changed, as it were, to sight, a kind of anticipation of the privileges of the celestial city; while others relate to the intellect, as the gift of teaching and convincing, a per-

suasive eloquence, profound knowledge of the Scriptures, and generally all those talents which can be applied to the service of religion. Such are the gifts of the first order; but, in the present day, we cannot accurately distinguish, in such an enumeration, those natural talents of the mind from those peculiar sentiments which grace has produced in a Christian soul.

In the train of these gifts, to speak after the manner of the apostle, come the gifts that are more feeble. These are humility, by which a believer abases himself before God, and regards others as more excellent than himself; fidelity, which will not be unjust in the smallest, any more than in the greatest things; purity of manners and of thought, which keeps undefiled the temple where the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell; truth which would not, for the greatest bribe, open its lips to the slightest falsehood; contentment, which bears all losses without a murmur, because its real treasure cannot be taken from it; activity, which remembers that the kingdom of God consists not in words, but in deeds; charity, in fine, but not charity factitious, borrowed, learnt by heart, but a true love, a tenderness of soul, which alternately pities and consoles, soothes and beseeches; which cannot revile or despise; which bears all things, excuses all things; which rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

Would you not, my brethren, regard him as supremely happy who had received from the goodness of God all these gifts united? Well one may possess them all, without making any noise in the world. A multitude of persons may have this assemblage of gifts truly divine, without being remarked, without being suspected. And in what caverns, you will ask me, in what deserts are these excellent persons concealed? In what deserts? In your cities, in your villages, in the midst of yourselves, to whom they hold relations of business and of friendship; in the world, where they have, so to speak, a profession, a post of duties. If you cannot discover them, look to yourselves! You have the eye of flesh that sees their bodies, the eye of self-love which sees defects; you have not the spiritual eye which seeks complacently in every soul, not vices and imperfections, but the glorious and delightful traces of the presence of the divine Spirit. And how otherwise could you perceive such persons? They have neither the vanity which pushes

itself forward, nor the talents which, willing or unwilling, compel belief. Let me speak plainly upon this point. Persons advanced in spiritual attainments often deceive themselves. Involuntarily they seek splendour and power, and nothing in the sphere to which they belong reveals to them either the one or the other. That faithful soul I have described to you cannot perhaps give an account of his thoughts; he is scarcely conscious of his state; he has the appearance of seeking long after that which he has found; he appears behind those whom he really precedes. His faith is not always a well connected system; it has many deficiencies, many apparent inconsistencies; faithful in principle, he errs sometimes in form. That very joy which seems inseparable from Christianity, does not appear very perceptible either in his aspect or in his discourse. That enthusiasm which kindles on the countenance of some, is foreign to his character, frightens perhaps his timid humility. In a word, his life is one "hid with God," which God only knows, and which God only appreciates.

But these obscure gifts are the ones which Paul exalts in my text, and proclaims as the most necessary. This is true, in the first place, with reference to the individual who possesses them. What is the great point at issue for him? What is his supreme interest? Is it the re-establishment in him of the divine image; it is regeneration; for regeneration is salvation? Well, that regeneration consists entirely in the obscure or feeble gifts of which we have spoken. The other gifts which God may confer upon a soul are, to speak justly, divine favours, by which he would make known his munificence; they are the splendours which he scatters here and there, as he judges necessary, special privileges, which serve to indicate, even on earth, to what glory a regenerated soul may attain in heaven. But it is not on this condition alone that he is regenerated and saved. Nor is there all the difference which might be thought between the more splendid and the more obscure gifts. When the sun sheds his beneficent rays upon our globe, he penetrates at once into palaces and cottages; but in palaces his beams are reflected from crystal and gold; in cottages they fall upon tarnished surfaces which give back no reflection;—no matter, in the cottage as well as in the palace, he diffuses heat and life. In the humble retreat of the poor, as well as in the mansion

of royalty, what has penetrated is equally the star of day, the king of the heavens, and the soul of nature. So, also, in the case of the obscure Christian, it is truly the Holy Spirit that dwells within him. If that Spirit does not reveal himself there with as much splendour, he dwells with no less entireness, and with all his essential characteristics. That which distinguishes a Christian is not precisely enthusiasm and ardour, still less talent and eloquence; but humble faith, the faith which knows how to wait, humility, and especially love. With these gifts, he has passed from death to life: what needs he more?

More? Ah! God has doubtless shown his wisdom in rarely according more. Danger is attached to all elevation, from which spiritual elevation is not excepted. Internal gifts are those particularly, which, incorporated with our being, appear to form a part of ourselves. We too easily forget that we possess them by grace, and that it is absurd to glorify ourselves on account of what we have received. Pride, which ferments secretly in the recesses of our soul, takes occasion to gain entire possession of it. Hence burning fervours and extraordinary talents have often been seen opening a passage to spiritual pride, which, like all other pride, goes before destruction. This danger is so real and so great, that our Lord frequently takes occasion to bring some internal humiliation upon those whom, without this, their privileges would elevate too high. St. Paul, without explaining himself further, tells us "of a thorn in the flesh," which doubtless reminded him of his former misery, and preserved him from being elated with pride. And to how many distinguished Christians has God shown himself on purpose sparing of some grace, the possession of which would have made their glory too complete and their position too perilous? How many Christians have found, in the necessity of struggling with some obstinate bias, or in the presence of some irresistible doubt, a counterpoise to that presumption which naturally springs from the consciousness of power! By which we may judge how wise is that precept of the great apostle, "Seek not high things, but walk with the humble."

These obscure and feeble gifts are also the most necessary to the church. All the graces of God, splendid or obscure, have benefited the church; but God having multiplied feeble Christians,

and distributed more sparingly those that are strong, has by this sufficiently indicated the importance he attaches to the former. If, in the primitive church, he granted extraordinary gifts to believers generally, it was only in a certain measure, and for a time. In general, he has appeared disposed to humble power, reserving triumphs for weakness. "He has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and feeble things to confound the strong, things vile and despised, yea, things that are not to bring to nought things that are." He has brought into competition, riches and poverty, wisdom and ignorance, philosophy and rusticity; but poverty, rusticity, and ignorance have conquered. From time to time he has called to his aid genius and power, and permitted them to co-operate in his work; but when he has so willed it, the sling of the young son of Jesse has sufficed to overthrow Goliath. The smallness of the means has only served to enhance the power of him who employed them. In all time, the church has been sufficient to the church, truth has been sufficient to truth. Eloquence and enthusiasm have not done so much for this sacred cause as the modest virtues, the uniform activity, and the patient prayers of thousands of believers whose names are unknown.

The consideration of the great movements which have been accomplished in the bosom of the church, have led some persons to a different judgment. A Paul, an Augustine, and a Luther, were certainly not feeble members of the church. Such men, or rather such powers, have been ordained of God, in the course of time, to prepare the soil of the church for a glorious harvest, to open to the Christian life a favourable and more extensive sphere. And God forbid that we should fail to recognize the importance of these grand manifestations! But the reign of God on earth is nothing else than his reign in each of the souls which compose the church. And if the prosperity of the church has for its measure the number and reality of individual conversions, if God is more honoured in the profound emotions of souls subdued by grace, than by the public and solemn proclamation of the doctrines of revealed religion, let us acknowledge as a truth, that the feeble members of the church contribute much more, proportionally, to the reign of God, than the powerful members of whom we have spoken.

As to the latter, it seems to us that admiration very generally

excuses us from imitation. Appearing at intervals, such men do not come into contact with us all. In this respect, their writings and their memory but imperfectly replace their life; for it is by feeble things, by ordinary and familar details, that they could make upon us a deep impression. Life alone could have acted upon life. But isolated from us by circumstances, by their very greatness, by their fame, they can exert upon us only an indirect and general influence, doubtless favourable and salutary, but going no further than simply disposing us to observe and study the feeble members of that flock, of which we must form a part in order to be the children of God. These latter models appear more within our reach, although their gifts may not be in reality either less precious or less divine than those of the first class of Christians. We feel that nothing can excuse us from their possession; that nothing can supply their place; that while we may be neither wise, nor eloquent, nor rapt by religious ecstacy, to the third heavens, we must be holy; and that is the natural vocation of every soul, and the design of God respecting us all. This holiness, proportioned to our measure, and adapted to a sphere of activity which does not transcend our own, attracts us by its simplicity, while it strikes us by its beauty. Mysterious in its origin, wonderful in its nature, nay, miraculous, if we consider the changes it produces, but not the less human, attainable, and practicable, it is the prose of the kingdom of heaven, which each is bound to speak. Yes, these lives, habitually imbued with the spirit of Christianity, of a single and even tenor, of a strict consistency, of a solemn unity, of a sweet serenity, and an indefatigable and tranquil activity, of a zeal which does much, and says little,—lives whose Christian character appears as much more incontestable as enthusiasm takes a place inferior to that of charity are what accomplish the most for the cause of Christ. These constitute the salutary contagion which is perpetually acting in the church, which has kept, through the most disastrous times, so many hearts for the Lord, and, in more favoured epochs, multiplied them abundantly.

These observations sufficiently prove that sincere and humble piety is the greatest of forces, and that the more feeble members of the church are the most necessary to its establishment and its con-

quests. It is not more difficult to prove that these are the members which are the most necessary to civil society. This is to add the last feature to their character; for we ought not to lose sight of the fact that the Christian is a citizen, and that every thing he has received from above has been given him to be used in society. We have distinguished two kinds of striking superiority, the one relating to the heart, the other to the intellect. As to the first, it has sometimes produced very great effects, but rather in the bosom of the church itself and in our spiritual relations, than in the relations of ordinary life. As to the second, which consists in mental gifts, it is beneficial only when it is animated and sanctified by the spirit of piety. But what is necessary to society is this very piety. The domain of piety is not confined within the circle of its meditations, to the inner life, and religious worship; piety is profitable for all things, is applicable to all things. But we go further, and say, piety is the only principle of the life of states, and the only remedy of diseased society. Behold, with all its array of human virtues and brilliant talents, what an aspect society presents. Raise yourselves a little higher than the limited circle of your domestic relations, though you may find even in these relations, in one way or another, the proof of what I advance; contemplate that vast horizon of society, listen to that frightful tumult of all the passions unchained, plunge into the heart, and into the remotest recesses of that gloomy labyrinth; in a word, for a few moments contemplate the world. Of course you have not the scrutinizing glance of Him who searcheth the hearts and the reins; you cannot go to the bottom of that revolting sink of iniquity which lies concealed in the heart! . . . My brethren, we cannot see the glory of God till we die; can we then, without dying, contemplate human iniquity? But you have seen the surface; that is enough. Judge now, if the finest talents are capable of establishing harmony in that chaos, peace in that tumult. Judge also, if the presence of a small number of men, full of Christian joy and enthusiastic fervour, and for that very reason unintelligible to the mass, could exert over it a sensible influence. O the true leaven in that mass is the humble, tranquil, obscure, active virtue of the thousands of the faithful, diffused through all the recesses of society, struggling by their example and their prayers against the general depravity, and causing

their light to shine before men so sweetly, as at least to attract some souls. It is such, that the Lord has cast, as seed into the world, a grain of which will produce in some twenty, in others thirty, and in others a hundred fold. These are the first-fruits of that great harvest which is ripening in the field of the world, and which, we have the assurance, will one day cover with its fruits the entire face of the earth.

That day is not yet come; and the circumstances which are to bring it develope themselves slowly. Every thing in the world moves more rapidly than the progress of that kingdom of love and peace. What improvements are to be made before man will deign to care for the improvement of his soul! Is it not strange to see him making himself sure of every thing except his salvation; restoring every thing except his conscience; speculating on every thing except eternity? Admirable age, to which nothing is wanting but the one thing needful! Political society is settling itself on new foundations, the rights of man are secured, and therein I rejoice; but in the midst of this development of arts and opulence I seek for the Holy Spirit, that spirit of moderation, of disinterestedness and of purity,—where is it? Science, literature, public instruction extend their domain; culture diffuses itself into all the places, and amid all the conditions from which it was banished; intelligence is every where honoured; and therein I certainly rejoice; but amid these triumphs of human thought I seek for the Holy Spirit, the spirit of humility, of piety and of charity;—where is it? Ah, my brethren, it is still necessary that the divine Consoler should console all, that this power should subdue all, that this life should animate all. Strive by prayer for the advent of that glorious day; contend for Jesus Christ, who has contended for you; supplicate with fervour that his kingdom may come; pray that "at his name every knee may bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Ask not for the extraordinary gifts which he shed upon the apostles in their day, but pray that the Holy Spirit of God may multiply among you the number of those feeble members, that is, of those humble and faithful Christians who are the power and hope of the Church. Let all of us together ask it from the Father of lights; and beseech him to add to the church, even on this day, some souls that may be saved.

XVII.

THE INTOLERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.

"He that is not with me is against me."—MATT., xii, 30.

THESE words were uttered by Jesus Christ, after the performance of one of his most splendid miracles. The Pharisees pretending that he had performed it by the power of the devil, Jesus Christ showed them that it was absurd to suppose that the devil would aid in the establishment of a religion altogether opposed to his interests. Is Satan, said he, divided against himself? Then, rejecting such an idea, our Saviour added, that if Satan was not his accomplice, as the Pharisees supposed, it followed that he was his adversary. And why? Because with reference to Jesus Christ, it is absolutely necessary to be one thing or another. Every one who is not with him is for the same reason, against him.

Thus Jesus Christ took occasion from a particular fact, to proclaim a great truth, one which is doubtless found diffused through the whole gospel, and results from the general spirit of the Christian system, but which had not yet received an expression so precise and solemn. It is this declaration of our Lord that will occupy our attention to-day. Our design is to develope the evidences of its truth; but it is necessary, first of all, to explain its principal terms.

Who is the man that is *against* Jesus Christ? It must be sufficiently obvious to all, that by this expression, our Saviour designs every man to whom the Gospel is an object of aversion and hatred, whether he conceal his sentiments in his heart, or manifest them in his words and actions. Who then is the man that is not *with* or *for* Jesus Christ? We do not need to collect the features of such an one, by means of our imagination. The world is full of persons who are not for Jesus Christ. We recognise them in all those members of the Christian church who belong to it only by

birth, and by certain external usages, but whose whole life proves that the church inspires them with no interest. They have accepted a religion as one accepts a country, not by free choice, but by necessity. Christians by birth, they are not such by affection. Having examined neither the proofs which establish the truth of Christianity, nor the objections by which it is assailed, they believe on the faith of others. They have some general notions of the doctrines of revelation, and have admitted them once for all, without ever thinking of them again. In a word, religion is to them a matter of high propriety, an interesting fact, a social necessity, but nothing more. It is neither the rule of their life, nor one of their interests. They aid neither by their prayers, nor their efforts, in the advancement of the kingdom of God. They do not inform themselves whether it advances or recedes. Every thing has more importance to them than the success of that great cause. Such are the principal features of the characters of the indifferent.

Now what says the Saviour with reference to these men? "They that are not for me are against me." We do not know a better way of establishing the truth of this, than by showing the falseness of the contrary proposition, namely, "One may not be for Jesus, and yet not be against him; he may be neither his friend nor his enemy; he may observe with respect to him, a species of neutrality." Let us see if such neutrality is possible.

I observe, in the first place, that a real neutrality is one of the rarest things in the world. Man is not made for indifference; undoubtedly he may feel neither love nor hatred for things which are completely foreign to him, and to which no circumstance directs his attention. But whatever affects him nearly, every thing which exerts an influence upon his fortune, nay more, every thing which he sees exciting general interest, becomes to him an object of some kind of sentiment. His tastes may change, but like a pendulum, he oscillates perpetually from affection to aversion, and from aversion to affection, without ever stopping in the intermediate space. His soul being made for feeling, and feeling being his life, he is, so to speak constrained to love or hate, and to flee from indifference as a kind of death. Each of us, by reflecting upon himself and consulting his recollections, will recognize this disposition without difficulty. This fact, then, will be sufficient to put us on our guard

against the notion, that we may *not* be *for* Jesus Christ, and yet not be *against* him.

But if the observation we have just made be true in general, it is especially so in the domain of religion. A religion is an opinion and a system; but what distinguishes it from all opinions and systems is, that it professes to be the work of God, and "all in all" to man. Any religion which should lay claim to less would belie itself, and be unworthy of the name of religion. If a religion is true, it follows that we ought to love it with all our heart; if false, to detest it with all our heart; for the question turns upon a matter of the highest excellence, or a criminal imposture; a work of God, or a work of the devil; a thing adapted to destroy, or to save our souls. Is neutrality, in such a case, possible? Can we remain, without any sentiment, in the presence of a fact, immense, overpowering, absorbing, which unceasingly solicts a decision? Is it not here that indifference must find its limit?

But I go further, and say, if we had even remained indifferent, we would not the less have made, without willing it, a choice. Because true religion, meriting nothing less than our whole love, not to devote ourselves to it is to be against it; and a false religion, not deserving any thing but our deepest hatred, not to oppose it is to be for it. Here any middle course is impossible. The indifferent person will hear false religion on the one side say to him, Since you are not against me, you are for me; and on the other side, true religion cry to him, Since you are not for me, you are against me.

And to make this last truth more evident, suppose that God manifest in the flesh has descended to the earth, in the person of a being resembling you; that the character of that being is the ideal of perfection; his work, the salvation of the human race; his precepts, holiness itself; his feelings in reference to you, a boundless compassion. You acknowledge in him all these attributes, and you say to him, Since thou art the ideal of perfection, the rule of holiness, God himself manifest in the flesh; since thou hast shed thy blood upon the cross for the salvation of my soul, I cannot be against thee, but I will not be for thee. And for whom, then, great God, for whom, then, is that heart! for it is necessary to be for some one; the heart must attach itself to something; it does

not live but as it loves. For whom, then, will you be, if not for God? Probably for yourselves, I suppose. But what is that *you*, separated from God, except the flesh in all its corruption and sin in all its deformity? And if a man is *for* such things, is he not *against* God? If he is for his own depraved will, is he not against God? If he is for a demon, is he not against God? No, my brethren, there are in the world only two empires, which I need not name; but I affirm that he who is not in the one, is necessarily in the other; that he who is not with Jesus Christ, is against Jesus Christ. Behold the neutrality of the indifferent!

The better to appreciate this neutrality, let us enter the heart of the indifferent, and give account of the feelings which reign there. He says he has no hatred. Let us pass it over. This hatred we shall soon meet again. But are there in his heart love and obedience; love especially for Jesus Christ? Assuredly not, seeing he is not for Jesus Christ. Well, to refuse love to Jesus Christ, I affirm, is to do him all the evil which an open enemy could, or, at least, would do. If Jesus Christ had come into the world, as a king into a revolted province, in order to extinguish rebellion, and cause the silence of terror to reign in it, he might be satisfied with a trembling submission, and care nothing for the evil we do him. But such a submission he did not desire, nor can desire. That alone which he desired, that alone for which he descended to the earth, the end to which he directed all his toils, was the conquest of our heart. Separate from that triumph, every other is nothing to him. If, then, instead of our hearts which he demands, we contemptuously offer him a passive submission which he does not ask; if, in the place of that devout gratitude which he has merited by his blood, we propose, as a matter of favour, to spare him our insults, would not this of itself be the cruelest of insults, the only one, indeed, to which he could be sensible? For what is our hatred in his eyes but the more clear and frank expression of the divorce which exists between him and us; a somewhat more distinct form given to the outrage which our ingratitude constantly presents before his eyes? But perhaps you consider it a more serious thing to attack and oppose him. Indeed, you are mistaken! For what could your miserable attacks add to the crime of your ingratitude? Ah, since you have the misfortune not to love

him, attack, combat, make war upon him, as you please. The Almighty will do well to be moved by the rebellion of an insect! Agitate yourselves, then; struggle in your dust; raise an entire world, if you can, against the King of worlds; you will not retard for a single instant, nor drive back a hair's breadth the progress of the eternal counsels; not that Jehovah will notice your ridiculous efforts because he sees all things; but because he has seen, before all, that you do not love him, a fact which ranks you with his enemies.

We have spoken of love, and what shall we say of obedience? Is there obedience in the indifferent? No, doubtless; for he who loves not, obeys not. It is true that a servile fear may fulfil some external duties, and produce a formal obedience; but the Gospel requires a spiritual obedience, which is not possible without love. To subdue his passions, to use the world as not abusing it, to live in all humility and charity, to consecrate all his powers to the advancement of the kingdom of God, is what the indifferent will not do, what he cannot do; he lives, then, in disobedience. But I ask you, how would that man be regarded in a state, who would not obey its laws? Certainly as an enemy; even if he had never taken up arms against it. Is not a rebellious subject an enemy? How, then, shall he be considered, who cares no more for the spiritual laws of Jesus Christ, than if Jesus Christ had never given them? Certainly as an enemy. Whence it follows, that he who is not for Jesus Christ is, for the same reason, against him.

But, we will not content ourselves with having shown that in principle the indifferent is a real enemy of Jesus Christ. We will show you further that, when circumstances will it, he becomes an enemy positively, and *in fact*. What, in reality, is this indifference, but a secret aversion to Christ and his doctrine, as we have already seen, a discord between the soul and Jesus, a slumbering enmity? As long as it is not excited by circumstances, it remains asleep, it has no consciousness of itself, it does not feel that it hates; and in some persons, it remains in this form, the most dangerous perhaps, all their life long. But in many others, unforeseen circumstances awaken it, and cause it to appear in its real character. Sometimes, it is a clearer view of the truth, by which it is awakened. That truth from which they turned away their eyes, by-and-by strikes them with unexpected vividness; they see at once that

the Gospel is a serious reality, and that they are about to accept or reject it. They call up the whole period during which they have sinned without reflection ; they feel, above all, that they have a heart which cannot relish the strict maxims and spiritual savour of the Gospel, and perceive the moment they treat it seriously, they must change their whole life. Then its renunciations, privations, sacrifices present themselves in a crowd ; indignation penetrates their soul ; but instead of directing it against themselves, whose conduct condemns the law, they direct it against the law which condemns their conduct. Thenceforward they can never speak of neutrality or indifference ; the vail is torn away, the wound is made, the hatred is aroused. Ever after they are directly against Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, also the transition of enmity to its true form has been occasioned by the religious revival of those around them. Persons have found themselves in the situation we have just described ; the truth has pierced them with an unexpected wound ; but after a moment of indecision, their indignation, which knew not what to fasten upon, has turned against themselves. In the necessity of hating either themselves, or the Gospel, they have preferred to hate themselves. And from hatred of themselves, they have naturally passed to the love of Jesus Christ. Then regenerated by the Spirit from on high, they have lived a new life ; and notwithstanding their humility and reserve, there is so much difference even externally, in living for the world, and living for God, that the change has struck their neighbours. Their life has become a living gospel. The indifferent and neutral have then read the Gospel, not in dead characters upon inanimate leaves, but in living letters in the hearts of men. This has formed, if I may so express myself, a new edition of the word of God, with the commentary of the Holy Spirit. Then the same struggle has been produced in the hearts of the indifferent we have already described, the evidence of the Gospel, the divinity of Christ, and the infinite solemnity of life, have burst upon their vision, and overwhelmed their soul. Then have they found it no longer possible to shut themselves up in a system of cold neutrality. The soul too strongly pressed, has been compelled to take a part,—alas ! it has taken its part, and that is to *hate!* but in spite of appearances, its position is

not essentially changed; it has the same aversion to the Gospel, only with a more vivid consciousness, and a deeper feeling; and we can only say, that in this is verified the prediction of the aged Simeon, who, when holding the infant Jesus in his arms, exclaimed, "By thee shall the thoughts of many hearts be revealed."

To hate Jesus Christ, such is the result in which neutrality and indifference eventually terminate. To hate Jesus Christ! what words are we compelled to utter! The most confirmed sceptic would not have himself considered as one who hates Jesus Christ. But this sentiment which horrifies the sceptic, is, ye indifferent ones, the habitual sentiment of your soul!

But that you may know at least what you do by hating Jesus Christ, come and see. That teacher, full of grace and truth, who went every where sowing the word of reconciliation; that compassionate physician, whom no wretch approached without being consoled; that friend, who sought to gather you to himself, before impending calamity, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, is the being whom you hate; that model of purity and charity, that man in whom his most furious enemies could not discover the shadow of a stain, is he whom you hate; that celestial hero, who, bearing on his conscience the guilt of humanity, sunk, in the garden of Gethsemane, under the burden of the sins of the whole earth, and drained for you the cup of divine wrath, as he lay prostrate in the dust, bathed in sweat and blood, is he whom you hate; that victim, who for you painfully climbed up the height of Calvary, permitted himself to be fastened to the cross, and suffered, in his person, all that imagination can conceive of agonies, and whose last groan was a prayer for his executioners, is he whom you hate! Do not reject this statement. If you are nothing for him, who has been every thing for you; if you do not give one pulsation of your heart for him who has given up his life for you; if your life is a perpetual resistance of his laws, you are his enemies; if you love him not, you hate him; and if you do not yet fight against him, you will fight against him soon.

I have arrived at the close of a painful demonstration, which I did not undertake, I ought to confess, without repugnance. But knowing too well the condition I have described, fully persuaded for a long time that he that is not with Christ is against him, I

have felt it my duty to point out to my brethren the dangers of a neutrality in regard to which many perhaps deceive themselves I would, therefore, say to them, after the example of Joshua, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Those have chosen, who, with slow and laborious step, but without irresolution, have commenced their march towards the land of infinite discoveries; who, not yet possessing the whole truth, seek it with sincerity and patience; who, solicited by the flesh and the world, turn with a sigh to God, who can aid them, and who, every day, offer to the Saviour their good-will, not being able to offer him any thing else. May God preserve us from discouraging any one, and "crushing," as the poet says, "the new-born germ, from which may spring an angel!" But there are others who have not chosen, and care not to choose. Some of them persuade themselves that provided they are neither for nor against Jesus Christ, he, in like manner, will neither be for nor against them. It was necessary to show such that the neutrality in which they concealed themselves is a real enmity, and that it will be judged as such. It was necessary to arouse such by our warnings, and, in our feebleness, we have made the attempt. Bless, Lord, these warnings, given in thy name. Cause them to penetrate, and take possession of all the souls which need to hear them; nay, of all our souls; for who does not need to be warned? Inspire us all with the sincere desire to belong to Jesus Christ entirely and for ever.

XVIII.

THE TOLERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.

"He that is not against us is for us."—Luke, ix, 20.

SOME days ago, we developed the meaning of these words of our Lord, "He that is not with me is against me." That was presenting to you the Gospel in all its intolerance. For the Gospel has its intolerance, although it sympathizes not with persecutors, and breathes entire religious freedom. Its intolerance consists in considering every one as an enemy who is not its friend. We endeavoured to convince you that this intolerance is reasonable, conformed to the nature of things, and worthy of God. To-day we attempt to explain these words, which are also those of our Saviour, "He that is not against us is for us." At first sight, nothing seems more contradictory than these two propositions. But the contradiction is only apparent; these two statements, instead of neutralizing, complete each other; they give a natural explanation of each other's meaning, and, to speak exactly, are only two aspects of the same truth. If our preceding text has shown us the intolerance of the Gospel, this shows us the limit of that intolerance. If the first has informed us of what the Gospel will not endure, the second teaches us what it will endure. If the one establishes the intolerance of God, the other attacks and reproves the intolerance of men. These two expressions, these two truths, support each other, and hold such a relation the one to the other, that, in discussing the first a few days ago, we pledged ourselves, as it were, to discuss the other to-day. This we proceed to do, without however concealing, that if our first subject was difficult, this is still more so. You will all feel this, more or less, and for the same reason, understand how necessary it is in such a matter, that the Holy Spirit, which has purified our intentions, should enlighten our understanding, and direct our words. Ask

this from him, on our behalf, and ask also for yourselves an attentive spirit, a docile heart, and that quick intelligence of divine things which cannot be given but by the Spirit of God.

While Jesus, accompanied by some disciples he had chosen, is exercising in Judea, his ministry of compassion, a man casts out demons in his name. His disciples wish to prevent him from doing so, because he follows not Jesus with them. But the Lord rebukes this indiscreet zeal, by saying, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us."

He that is not against us is for us. In the sense of the text we explained the other day, these words would be false; for we have seen that if any one is not positively the friend of Jesus, he is his enemy. But let us carefully notice what is referred to in the words we explain to-day. It is a man that cast out demons in the name of Jesus, only he does not follow Jesus with his disciples.

But such a man, though he did not form a part of the company that followed Jesus Christ, was certainly not against him; he was for Jesus Christ as much as the disciples themselves, and perhaps even more so. But what in fact was necessary in order to be *for* Jesus Christ? To confess his name and to do his work; and these two conditions were united in the man under consideration.

He confessed the name of Jesus Christ; for the Gospel informs us that it was in the name of Jesus that he cast out demons. Thus Jesus was to him what he is to all Christians, "He that was sent to destroy the kingdom of Satan,"—he before whom all the powers of darkness and the empire of evil must bend and fall,—whose name alone, invoked through faith, is an impenetrable buckler against all the fiery darts of hell,—in a word, a Saviour, because he saves us from our most cruel, from our only real enemy.

Not only did this man confess the adorable name of Jesus, but he performed his work, he cast out demons. He fought under the banner, and for the cause of Jesus. He advanced, according to his ability the triumph of his Master. He made the enemies of Jesus his enemies, and the great design of Jesus his interest. What more did those disciples who accompanied Jesus in all his wanderings? The following we read in the chapter from which our text is taken, "And behold a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son; for he is mine only child. And

lo, a spirit seizes him, and causes him to cry out; and it teareth him so that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering, said, O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" (v. 39–41). To whom, in your opinion, did he address these overwhelming words, "Unbelieving and perverse generation," but to his disciples? With whom if not with the disciples was Jesus tired of associating? And these very disciples, destitute of the faith necessary to perform the work of their Master, are the ones opposed to the labours of that unknown man? And why? Because he followed not Jesus with them.

Such, in fact, is all the difference which appears between this man and the disciples. It must be confessed that at first sight it is striking. How can he be *for* Jesus Christ and not follow him? But without seeking, by means of gratuitous suppositions, for the reasons which kept this man by himself, and compelled him to serve Jesus at a distance from him, let us observe, that at this period, our Saviour was accompanied only by those whom he had expressly called, by authoritatively separating them from their labours and their families, in order to prepare them for a glorious apostolate. It was thus he commanded Peter to leave his nets, and Matthew his bank and follow him; but such an appeal doubtless had not been addressed to this man. It was only a little later (chap. x,) that seventy disciples were associated with the twelve apostles; and who knows that this adorer of the name of Jesus did not take the first place among them?

But all this is not of so much importance as the reflection we are about to present. What is it to follow Jesus Christ? According to the apostles, yet imperfectly enlightened, it is to accompany the person of the Saviour in all places, and it was thus they followed him. But such a view is gross and carnal, and we appeal, on this point, to the apostles themselves. One of them, the organ, in this matter, of the sentiment of all, has clearly expressed it, in saying, "If we have formerly known Christ according to the flesh, we know him in this manner no more." (2 Cor., v, 16.) And well has the apostle said so; for to know Jesus Christ is not to have seen him in the flesh; to follow Jesus Christ is not to follow his person. To

know and to follow him is to recognize him as God manifest in the flesh, to rest upon his promises, to breathe his spirit. In this sense we can follow him, though separated by a thousand leagues and a thousand years.

Let us see, according to this view, how the apostles followed him, at the period referred to in my text. The imagination is pleased to represent that retinue of friends accompanying Jesus every where; but it sees them such as they since became, not such as they were then. Did these men, whom Jesus had chosen, not for what they were in themselves, but, as one may say, for what they were not, in order more fully to illustrate in them his power, really follow Jesus Christ? Did they follow him when they disputed among themselves who should occupy the first place in heaven? (Mark, ix, 33, 34.) Did they follow him, when they besought him to bring down fire from heaven, to destroy an unbelieving city? (Luke, ix, 54.) Did they follow him, when, doubting whether they had done wisely in attaching themselves to him, they asked from him indemnities and pledges for a sacrifice scarcely commenced? (Mark, x, 28.) Ah! how many times, in the midst of that company of apostles, was the Son of God alone? The sole confidant of his own high designs, the sole auditor of his own divine thoughts, how often did he seek around him in vain for a single soul that comprehended him, a single heart that loved him as he wished to be loved! In this point of view his solitude was profound. It was one of the most painful trials of his life, as it was to be the bitterest pang of his death. What, then, did these disciples claim when they said, "This man followeth thee not with us"? What difference did that establish in their favour; and how could they know that this unknown person did not follow Jesus better than they did themselves?

O, how does intolerance here, as in all other cases, show itself the close companion of weakness, and tolerance the associate of greatness! Jesus is the most tolerant of beings, because he is the most holy. Every thing which affects his person as a man, disturbs him not, wounds him not. What is it to him that this man does not follow him with the twelve? He casts out demons, and casts them out in the name of the Son of God. It is enough; this man is for him.

On the contrary, see these apostles still so weak in faith. Their disposition is the reverse of that of Jesus. What wounds them is not what wounds the cause of God, but what offends the person of their Master as a man, say rather, what offends their own person! What, in fact, is their complaint? "He followeth thee not with us;" he is not one of us. True he confesses the name of Jesus; true he casts out demons; but he follows not Jesus with us; it is enough; he is against Jesus. You have seen the tolerance of God; behold the intolerance of man.

The question now presents itself, whether this declaration of Jesus is applicable only to the occasion on which it was uttered; or whether it may not be applicable to our times and our circumstances. Are there, in our day, persons who wish to forbid others to cast out demons in the name of Jesus, because they follow him not with them? My brethren, while admitting some differences produced by difference of times, and giving to some expressions a more general sense, we meet, in our day, the same kind of intolerance as that which merited the rebuke of our Saviour, and we find for his words an immediate and constant application.

To prevent a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus, is what we cannot always do; but to reject, to exclude, to condemn him we certainly can. To cast out demons, as the man in the text did, is what cannot take place in modern times; but to oppose the power of the devil, by repelling his pernicious inspirations, by avoiding the snares he lays for our souls, by extirpating from our own hearts and those of others, the germs of vice and error he has deposited there, is as possible in our day as in the time of the apostles; and, thanks to God, is what we frequently witness. Finally, to condemn, reject, and exclude a man, who, though he follows not Jesus with us, does, nevertheless, perform the works we have just indicated, is still seen, and seen every day; and this therefore, furnishes a perpetual application for these most benignant words of the Saviour, "Why do ye forbid him? He that is not against us is for us."

Jesus has disappeared from the earth, we cannot, therefore, follow his person; but in the spiritual sense we have explained, some are easily induced to believe that they follow him better than others. Such a church, or such a community believes that to follow Jesus

Christ, it is necessary to be with it, form a part of its organization, join the society of which it is composed, espouse its interests, hang out its banner. This church, this community, then, still appears, as in the times of Isaiah, to utter these words, so full of presumption and bigotry, "Stand back, come not near me; for I am holier than thou." (Is., lxv, 5.) And more than this, we see that proposition put in practice, which shocks us so much in the doctrines of a communion from which we have separated: "Out of our church no salvation!"

Yet, it is certain, in the first place, that no church can flatter itself, that it is exempt from faults and imperfections. No church can offer itself as a perfect model to all others; consequently, no church can pretend that out of its pale it is impossible to belong to Jesus. It is absolutely necessary, then, in order to judge of those, who are not of its body, to have recourse to some other test than the gross one of opening its registers, and seeing if such a name is found there.

Even, if it were perfect, and permitted to think so, it would not, on that account, be justified in condemning those who do not belong to it. And for this simple reason, that perfection in doctrine and in morality cannot be the heritage of all; that some particular errors, some imperfections of detail, do not hinder a man from being essentially, in a good state; that in every case there is a progressive improvement, with which none can well dispense; that, in general, no one arrives by a single effort, at what is best in theory and practice; and that all that man can reasonably require from his fellow-man is, that he should follow the road which conducts thither.

What I have just said is not intended either to rejoice the careless or alarm the strict. For, in the first place, it is certain that the Gospel requires nothing less from all its disciples than perfection, both in faith and in morals; and secondly, it has so clearly traced the limits, beyond which there is nothing but error and condemnation, that it is impossible, on this subject, to make the slightest mistake. What is the man who follows not the Saviour with his apostles, but nevertheless, is for Jesus, according to the declaration of Jesus himself? He is one who casts out demons in the name of Jesus. I say, then, to every intolerant community, You condemn that

man because he follows not Jesus with you; but is it necessary to be with you in order to confess the name of Jesus? This, however, is evidently done by the man whom you condemn. I admit that he has not studied so profoundly the system of religion as you have; that he does not with such exactness unite its different parts; that he does not so thoroughly understand the Scriptures; that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been conferred upon him, in scanty measure, and apparently according to his necessities; but he confesses the name of Jesus. The consciousness of his misery has led him to Christ; he has cast himself into the arms of the Saviour; he has loved him with all the love of which his heart is capable. It is in Him that he seeks an asylum against the wrath to come, a consolation in his sorrows, a resource in his wants. It is through Him that he invokes his Heavenly Father; and it is the name of Jesus, which he loves to whisper in the silence of his closet, and delights to honour before men, as the only name by which he can be saved. What wants he more? What! join himself to you? Confess your name as equal to that of the divine Saviour? Hang out your banner by the side of that of the Lamb? But who has told you that, I pray you? Whence do you derive it but from yourselves? I think all that you can claim from him (my text teaches so), is that he be not against you, that he do not reject and condemn you. Nay more, even if he had declared against you by prepossession and error, he has done nothing more than you have done to him. If he ought not to do so, why do you yourselves do it? And if you can do it, why might not he? The wrong is reciprocal; and both he and you have to return within the bounds of equity.

I acknowledge, however, that it is not every thing, simply to confess and invoke the name of Jesus. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven." He must, in addition to this, cast out demons in the name of the Lord, that is, he must sanctify himself. And this is precisely what that man has done whom you condemn. I can easily believe that he is behind you, but he advances; I can easily believe that you are far before him, but he follows you; I can believe that you have found means of edification of which he is ignorant, and admit, that if he were more enlightened, he would profit by the resourses you have found, and that he would join you. Nevertheless, he has under-

stood and his conduct proves it, that whosoever says he belongs to Christ ought to live even as Christ lived; that the crucifixion of the old man with his lusts is the only homage worthy of being offered to the Saviour; that he must cast out, in his name, the demons of pride, of sensuality, of self-love, and of self-righteousness which infest the heart of man; that he must contend against them by vigilance and prayer; and that unless he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. I say to you, God alone may require more; yet I believe he casts a look of benignity and peace upon that servant, who has been faithful in few things it is true, but yet faithful. It is for you, then, to condemn him?

How often have I seen, bearing the burden of the day, and bending under the cross of his Saviour, a man to whom intolerance has scarcely accorded the name of Christian. Contending with old weaknesses, so hard to remove, bowed down under the habits of a long life, and still retaining the visible imprint of his fetters, inveterate habits and usages still revealed in him the old man. Yet he had heard the call of grace, and according to the measure of strength given him, he had made his way out of that valley of the shadow of death, by a painful path, bathed in sweat and tears. He confessed Jesus with sincerity; but with the feeling of wretchedness scarcely removed. It was only with timidity, that he could deem himself one of the sheep whom Jesus knows, whom Jesus loves, and whom his crook conducts to the pastures of life. And I have seen men, on account of the incoherence of his language, the remains of his ancient habits, and the feebleness of his character, take it upon them to refuse him the title they accorded to themselves, and dispute his interest in their common hopes! Yet these men call themselves Christians! And they were such in fact; but the remains of the old man persuaded them, that in order to follow Jesus Christ, he must follow him *with them*, seek their society, relish their discourse, adopt their practices. But I have consoled myself by remembering that they were at one time more exclusive still, that Christianity had already partially subdued their native intolerance; and by reflecting, that in proportion as they should more fully taste the gift of God, they would put on more and more that divine compassion, charity, and meekness, which ought ever

to distinguish the elect of God, his saints and well beloved ones; for tolerance I have said already, is always in proportion to holiness.

Ah! if in our day, we had to complain only of the intolerance of Christians, we should be tranquil. Faith, which is the occasion of it, is also its remedy. But there is a more formidable intolerance, that of unbelief, or a dead faith. We have seen, with profound regret, Christian communities condemn men, though they cast out demons in the name of Jesus; but we may also see unbelievers and formalists condemning others, precisely because they cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Tolerant of indifference and lukewarmness, it is for zeal and living faith that they reserve their intolerance. And, what is remarkable, it is not because they believe themselves to possess the depository of truth and the standard of morals, but on the contrary, because they feel that they have them not, and cannot suffer any one to enjoy a blessing, of which they are destitute. And not only do they condemn them by their words, but they *hinder* them, when they can, they interdict, they persecute them. They deny and trample under foot, not merely the letter and spirit of the Gospel, but the most sacred rights of the human race. And the immense progress of light is not sufficient to repress these excesses, and public reason is scarcely shocked at them.

My dearly beloved brethren, pray with me for the peace of Jerusalem; pray that the powers of darkness may not long oppose the reign of light; pray that the consciences of men may receive no other impulse than that of the Holy Spirit. Above all, pray that Christianity, becoming purer in all the souls that have received it, may present, in every place, the example of that divine tolerance which shone in the person of its adorable founder; pray that all Christians may become more and more worthy of that divine banner, under which they have ranged themselves, the device of which is Love! And thou eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou who art clothed with all perfection, and whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, but who art full of patience and long-suffering, breathe thy indulgent spirit into those who themselves need it so much from thee; teach them tolerance to those whom thou dost tolerate; give to them the dispositions of

Jesus Christ, who, satisfied with a pure intention, and an honest will, waits long for what he might demand at once. Teach us, like him, to look upon the heart, upon what is essential, and not upon vain circumstances. Enlarge our heart; tear away the prejudices and pride which have narrowed its entrance, and grant that all those whom thou hast given us as brethren, may find there an asylum and a home!

XIX.

THE WORK OF GOD.

"Then said they unto him, what shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."—John, vi, 28, 29.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

HAVING witnessed the miracles of Jesus Christ, and particularly that of the multiplication of the loaves, the people clung to the steps of that wonderful man; and the same Jesus, accustomed to go before his brethren, appeared, in this instance, doubtless for very wise reasons, to conceal himself from their pressing importunity. When they reached the other side of the sea of Tiberias, whither he had gone, as it appears, to be free from their solicitations, he receives them with these mortifying words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the bread, and were satisfied." But it is not enough to mortify them, if he does not instruct them; and therefore he adds, "Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man will give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed."

It would seem as if the reproach with which Jesus commenced, might have taken from the multitude the desire to prolong that conversation. It would seem that, discouraged by the severity of his first words, and the more as that severity was just, they would think only of retiring at a distance from Jesus Christ, from whom, for the moment, they could not hope to obtain any temporal favour. If a man, before whom we had presented ourselves with all the tokens of respect and confidence, should receive us as Jesus Christ on this occasion received the Jews, we should be too much mortified, or perhaps irritated, to engage in conversation with him, or

even to remain in his presence. The Jews, however, remained, and put questions to Jesus, as if the gravity of his words subdued and retained them in spite of themselves, or as if they hoped, by a serious question, to give him a more favourable opinion of themselves and their motives; and since he had said to them, *labour*, which to them signified "do works," they asked him, "What shall we do to work the works of God?"

What does this question mean? About what did the Jews enquire? They spoke of the works of God, and by that expression they doubtless meant, works which God loves, which God commands, which render us agreeable to God, and like God. But did they wish to know how to be enabled to do such works, or did they wish to know what these works are? If their question had the first meaning, it were a good one; it would indicate, on their part, an idea truly just, and a feeling truly valuable; it would prove that above all they felt the need of an internal force, of a controlling principle, which might enable them to will all that God wills. That question would prove, that in their actual condition, they felt themselves incapable of doing those works before they had received a new spirit, a new heart, a new life. That question would then only be an humble acknowledgment of their misery and weakness. But that confession is not included in the question they addressed to Jesus. Do we not know them? Do we not know their leaders and guides? Is there not an immense distance between that sentiment and the gross and interested motive which caused them to persist in following Jesus Christ? If Jesus Christ had attached that meaning to their question, would not his answer have apprised us of it? No, every thing concurs to prove, and the form even of their question indicates, that their thought was this, Tell us what are the works of God that we may do them.

But consider, that they knew well enough, or at least might have known, if they wished, what are the works of God. Moses and the Prophets had taught them with sufficient clearness and fulness. There was no precept of Christian morality which might not be found in the writings of the old dispensation, by every one at least who could read them; and Jesus Christ came not to teach new duties, but to enforce the obligation which binds us to the old, and give us new power to fulfil them. These Jews, then,

enquired about what they knew already, and not about that of which they were still ignorant. They said, We *can*, but we do not *know*. They should have said, We *know*, but we *cannot*, or rather we *will* not; or again, We cannot *will;* for in every thing which concerns obedience to the law of God, to *will* is to be *able*.

Since they thought thus, it is quite clear, that they spoke of various works, and what they said to Jesus Christ was, Teach us what are "the works" of God. This was the spirit of their time and country. To them, as well as the Pharisees, their models, morality was composed of a greater or smaller number of practices and observances; and the difficulty was to know them all, in order not to neglect any, not even in their slightest details. Work after work, nothing but works, namely, those external acts, which the hand does and the eye sees. Such to them was the spirit of morality; such, to the best of them, was virtue. There were among them a few who formed a higher idea of morality, a few who placed above works the motive or the sentiment by which they were inspired, and to whom the obedience of the heart was the most important of works; a few also who felt their fallen condition, and their inability to do the works of God, before receiving a new heart from God. Nay, perhaps some of those who addressed the question, "What must we do to work the works of God," did so in good faith.

Let us not reject such, or treat them with greater severity than did Jesus Christ himself. It is even something to enquire concerning the works of God in order to do them; for it was said of him who endeavoured from his youth to fulfil them all, that "Jesus loved him." (Mark, x, 20.) It is something, we say, to enquire concerning the works of God; it is much in comparison with the indifference of that multitude, who cared not to know, because they cared not to act. The reply of our Saviour includes, I acknowledge, the rectification of a false idea. It teaches the Jews that they were deceived, but it is not a reproach; it is an instruction; it is a lesson. Let us endeavour to penetrate its meaning.

We arm ourselves with our Saviour's language against two opposite errors. It is a sword, the edge of which may be successively directed against Jews and Christians, or rather against a certain number of Jews and a certain number of Christians;

against those who, in each of these two churches, corrupt, by exaggerating the principle upon which their church is based. There are two churches, in fact, but not two religions.[1] Judaism and Christianity can be nothing but two eras of one and the same truth, two poles of the same axis, the prow and the stern of the same vessel. Each of these two systems has its word of order and rallying; that of the Jewish church is *law*, that of the Christian church is *faith;* but the error to which each is exposed is to lose sight of and exclude the principle to which it does not owe its name, but without which it can possess neither force nor life. The error of the Jews is to reduce every thing to works, and never to ascend to faith; that of Christians is not to see that true faith is a work, and if it is not a work, that it is nothing. But these two errors do not characterize so much two epochs, one of which is yet remaining, and the other of which is past, but two classes of persons or two tendencies, which reproduce themselves in all times and places. In addressing ourselves to both, we are certain not to see one portion of our words lost in the abyss of the past, and the other only finding an application in the present. The two errors we have marked are actual and living, and both doubtless will find representatives in every community.

It appears to us that our Lord had more reasons than one to answer the Jews as he did, and that his response may be taken in more than one sense; and first, in the following. "You curiously enquire concerning the works of God, and how they may be done; you run after righteousness and obedience; you seem to say to God, Speak, Lord, thy servants hear. Well, then, the Lord is here in the person of his Messenger; behold before you Him of whom Moses, in former times, has said, "The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like unto me, him shall ye hear;" but you do not hear him, you do not hear him as a prophet, as the only prophet *resembling* your great and first prophet, as the Messiah of God, as your King and Saviour, as the reality of the types, the fulfilment of the prophecies, the end of the law. In vain you press around

1 Vinet here uses the word church in a somewhat loose and general sense, as descriptive of a system or a community. The term, in strict scriptural usage, has a very different sense. It is, however, certain there was a term church among the Jews, just as there is such a church among nominal Christians; but the term may be applied indiscriminately to all or both.—T.

him and follow him to the desert; you follow him as one who has satisfied your wants, as one, perhaps, who has done great works, but not as him who is the way, the truth, and the life. You recognize him perhaps as a *messenger* of God, but not in a high and incommunicable sense, as *him whom God hath sent* to accomplish all his will with reference to you and all mankind. He of whom Moses spoke, in whom Abraham rejoiced, whose humiliation Isaiah predicted, and whose day Daniel indicated, is come; he stands before you, he utters in your hearing words full of grace and truth, yet you do not perceive him. You, who are so quick to recognize the signs of the times, who are so smitten with every thing which is called glory, you do not discern this time, you do not perceive this glory. It is not enough even that you do not acknowledge him whom God hath sent, ye do not even listen to what he announces. If any one should come in his own name, with promises of worldly glory and prosperity, you would receive him readily enough; but you do not receive Him who comes in the name of God, with divine authority, and in the Spirit of God. Your hardened heart rejects "the *sent* of God," and yet you care for the works of God! What hypocrisy and blindness! The works of God! But first do this, give glory to God by receiving Him whom he hath sent; and when you enquire as to the means of honouring him by your works, do not begin to dishonour him by your unbelief. How can you do the works of God when you shut the doors of your hearts against Him who speaks in his name? First open your eyes, believe in the Messenger of God, believe in God himself; this is the work I propose to you on this behalf; this is the work which must be done first; the others you will not do before.

We venture to attach another meaning to the words of our Lord. God has promised to send, in the course of ages, another prophet, one resembling your first prophet, and who could not resemble him, except by being his superior, if, like him, and on the same foundation, he is to found a church and a people. God has promised this, and you believe it. But if you believe it, you admit, on the same ground, that this new prophet will teach you to do the works of God. For if he does not teach you this, what would he teach you? But how could he teach you were he not that pro-

phet? How, again, could you learn any thing from him who says he is that prophet, but is not? Will you give the lie to all your prophets, and say that this prophet was not to come? Will you say he was to come, but that the man before you, this Jesus, mighty in words and in deeds, is not he who was to come? You may shut your eyes to the light, but know, after all, that these works respecting which you show some anxiety, you will never do but by faith in him whom God hath promised; know that without him ye can do nothing; know that ye must be united to him, partake of his spirit, believe the truths he announces, and especially believe the truth of which he is the representative, in order to do the works of God. Others have done these works before you, who, not seeing the Messiah with their natural eye, have seen him by the eye of faith, have embraced him by hope, have possessed him by love. In whatever way he communicates to men that wonderful power, it is he, and no other, that communicates it. Believe, then, that it is he who was to come, and ask him; or believe that he is not the promised one, and do not ask him. Deny at once that advent, and whatever must accompany it; deny the Messiah when he is come, but never hope to do the works of God until with the heart and the mouth you have said; "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"[1]

We are approaching, step by step, the most profound sense, the real sense, of our Saviour's reply. It is proper to believe, without comprehending it, that the power to do the works of God depends upon faith in him whom he hath sent; but it is given to us to comprehend it, as it was given to those, who living before the advent of Jesus Christ, were united to him by faith, to experience it. Let us take up the question of the multitude.

That multitude appear to be animated by a laudable desire. They wish to do the works of God. *The works of God*,—expression strong and emphatic in its brevity,—are the works which God commands, which are done in his spirit, which honour him, and which, consequently, he accepts and approves. This, doubtless, is the idea of the Jews. But it does not go to the bottom of

[1] These meanings of our Saviour's language so admirably paraphrased by our author, are not really two, or *double* meanings, but simply two aspects and applications of one and the same meaning.—T.

the subject, for it does not reach the principle of true obedience, and the only condition of real works of God. A work of God is, above all, a work which has an affinity to God. All other characteristics are comprised in this, all depend upon it. But we cannot, without an abuse of words, speak of an affinity to God which does not consist in love. Indeed, if you do not love God, you have no relation to him but that of fear. But fear is not an affinity, it is its opposite; it does not unite, it separates. If the object of God in giving a religion to men is to unite them to him, if the very name of religion expresses that object, it is necessary, first of all, that this connection of love should be established between men and him. And all the works which men may do, without this connection, are not works of God. It is impossible they should be performed in his spirit, because nothing but love can transfer his spirit to ours. Nor is it possible they should honour him; for if love has not dictated them, fear has, and fear does not honour him. It is equally impossible he should approve them; for what he desires, the only thing, indeed, he can desire, is our heart, and that is not in them. In fine, it is impossible they should be the works he has commanded; for, what is singular but true, that which he has enjoined is not the accomplishment of one work more than another, but the accomplishment of every work, with a recognition of its cause, and a pure motive. For it is the motive, in some sense, which is the object of the commandment; the first and great commandment, the summary of the law, both for Jews and Christians, being love. Shall we not add, then, that a work of God, or a work worthy of God, ought, necessarily to be a work of freedom. And since there is a law we have not made, which binds us, willing or unwilling, a work commanded cannot, at the same time, be a work of freedom, but by the intervention of love, which, to speak correctly, is freedom in obedience. We may conclude, then, that the Jews, whose question was entertained by our Saviour, would have addressed to him one more worthy of his approbation, if, instead of saying, What shall we do to perform the works of God, they had said, Master, what shall we do to love God?

Call to your recollection that scribe who one day said to Jesus Christ, "Master, thou hast well and truly said, that there is only one God, and none other but he; and to love him with all the

heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." (Mark, xii, 32, 33.) What do you read after these words? "Jesus, seeing that he had answered intelligently, said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." (ver. 34.) Measure the force of these words in the mouth of Jesus. To be thus *intelligent* is more than all the wisdom of sages; *to be not far from the kingdom of God* is more than all the glory and magnificence of kings. Nevertheless, the superiority of that man is enclosed within two limits; if on the one side he is separated from the folly of the world, on the other he has not yet seized that kingdom which cannot be moved. Jesus Christ only said, that he was not far from it. But this is ever a sublime and glorious testimony: and Jesus Christ would have degraded it by according it to the Jews whose question we are considering. Why? Because they were not *intelligent*, like that scribe; because they did not appear, like him, to understand that love is the fulfilment of the law, and the true secret of doing the works of God.

But it may be asked, why did not Jesus Christ, on the latter occasion, at once say to the Jews, The work of God is to love him, instead of saying, The work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent? Why, he might have said both the one and the other; but after having in other interviews declared that the means of doing the works of God was to love him, he went further this time; he proceeded to the very termination of his idea, and of the truth, and made his hearers acquainted with the *means* of the *means itself*, that is to say, the means of loving God. But that means is believing on him whom God hath sent. To say to the Jews that they must love God would not be teaching them, properly speaking, any thing new; it would only be sending them back to the most express and solemn declarations of the ancient law. And it is worthy of remark that Jesus Christ did not himself cite that supreme ordinance, but drew it from the mouth of his hearers, and only appeared desirous of receiving their acknowledgments respecting it. Happy they, doubtless, who of their own accord, and by the secret inspiration of the Holy Spirit laid down at his feet that avowal, so sweet, and yet so formidable? Jesus Christ com-

mended their *wisdom*, and announced to them, that they were not far from the kingdom of God.

But in this instance, omitting apparently a truth which is to find itself entire in the answer he designs, instead of sending them to love, sending them to the source of love, he replies to them, in that striking sentence, "The work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent." Transported to that elevation, they will there infallibly find the answer to their question, the end of their anxiety, the beginning of life.

And who is he whom God hath sent? What is it to believe on him? And what connection is there between that belief and the love of God? What connection? It probably escapes, in the first instance, the greater part of the hearers of Jesus Christ, but it will not escape them always, and certainly it cannot escape us. He whom God hath sent in his well-beloved, his Son, his other self; it is himself in a person like unto us; a man, perfectly man, a God, perfectly God. To believe on him, is not simply to believe what we have just said, but to believe that he hath been sent to us, given to us; it is to believe that the supreme object of the Father's love, he whose very name of Son worthily characterizes his nature, the perfection of glory, embracing in a boundless love the whole human race, has clothed himself with our mortal flesh, in order to be our Redeemer from death, our Representative, our Surety and Intercessor. Take away, by a mournful supposition, take away Jesus Christ from the world, with his might of compassion, and his title of Saviour, and by consequence, replace humanity where Jesus Christ found it, before an unknown God, the God of Sinai, enveloped in thick clouds, penetrated here and there, only by threatening flashes of lightning; or before the God of the philosophers,—power without personality, essence without feeling, gulf of existence, terror of the imagination and the heart; or, finally, before two closed gates, one of which is the gate of perdition, the other that of annihilation.[1] Yes, replace humanity where Jesus Christ found it,

[1] It may be thought singular, that the God of the philosopher should generally be an impersonal God, a God either so spiritual, or so material, that he cannot be separated, even in idea from the universe he has made; a God so infinite, and so creative, that without violation or determination of the will, he must ever produce whatever exists in what we call the creation, throwing off continually, as from an exhaustless centre, all beings, and

and say to that humanity, Love God, if there be a God, love him if he be just, love him if he loves you! From the depths of those palpitating hearts, you will hear uttered a thousand anxious cries, cries incessantly checked. Yes, God loves us; but what if he should

all modes of being; a God so perfect and absolute, that he has, properly speaking, neither mind nor body, but is all mind and all body, and not only so, but blends and absorbs all finite existences, material and immaterial, in his own boundless essence. According to this view, men and angels, with all material things, are but the necessary and outward manifestation of God, a part therefore of God, shadowy and imperfect, and destined, in due time, to return unto God. So that He only exists as the infinite and eternal Me, "power without personality, essence without feeling, gulf of existence (*gouffre des existences*), terror of the imagination and the heart."

It may be deemed singular, we say, that philosophers have generally formed this conception of God, which, by the way, is the idea of the more dreamy and speculative systems of pagan idolatry, and easily harmonizes with the grossest superstition on the one hand, and the deepest sensualism on the other. But when we look into the matter more narrowly, it will not appear so strange as at the first view. For those who reject revelation, necessarily reject the idea of an absolute creation, and a superintending providence, truths which lie at the basis of all correct theology; and hence, they plunge at once into that ocean of difficulties, where all the speculations of ancient heathen philosophy were engulfed and lost. Assuming the axiom, *ex nihilo, nihil fit*, "from nothing, nothing is made," which is true in one sense, though not in another, true perhaps in an absolute, but not in a relative sense, that is to say, true when applied generally, but not true in reference to God, and the possibility of his creating separate substances or essences, whether minds or bodies, in a way not explained, or perhaps capable of being explained to us; assuming this, the philosophers referred to, make creation a necessary, and not a voluntary act of God, and represent matter as a mere modification of himself. Here then the distinction between God and his creation, between spirit and matter, vanishes, leaving but one substance, one essence or being, in existence, which may be called God, Nature, or the Universe, as individuals may please. Dr. Norton, in his Essay on the Latest Form of Infidelity, states, apparently on good authority, "that the celebrated Atheist Spinoza, composed the work in which his opinions are most fully unfolded, in the Dutch language, and committed it to his friend, the physician Mayer, to translate into Latin; that, where the name of *God* now appears, Spinoza had written *Nature:* but that Mayer induced him to substitute the former word for the latter, in order partially to screen himself from the odium to which he might be exposed."

Spinoza, as all will admit, is the father of modern Pantheism, the high-priest in reality of trancendental and mystical Atheism. He is much admired by the Hegelians, and even by the Eleetics, of whom Cousin is the most distinguished representative; and his works have recently been republished and extensively circulated in Germany and France. In his *Posthumous Ethics*, he sets out with the proposition that "there cannot be two

not love me! Yes, God is just, but if he is just, he is formidable, and how can I love him; and if not just he is not to be revered, and how can I love him? God exists, that is clearer than the light of the sun; God is good, since he is God; but if he is God, he is holy,—what can I thence conclude, what can I hope? What does he will? What has he resolved? Can I love him simply because he is worthy of love? Can I love him if he does not love me? Can I love one who perhaps hates me? Can I love in such uncertainty? And must not God first set my heart at liberty, in order that I may run in the way of his commandments?

I represent thoughtful and not frivolous men speaking thus; the latter perhaps imagine they love God, for the very reason, perhaps,

substances or essences"—"that substance is self-existent and infinite," and consequently, that there "is but one substance," which he calls God. "By God," says he, "I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, every one of which expresses an infinite essence." (See Posthumous Ethics, Schol. in Prop. 8; Schol. in Prop. 10). On this ground, God cannot in the proper sense of the term create; "for one substance cannot be produced by another substance." Hence, also, Spinoza denies all miracles, taking the very ground of Hume, that they are impossible; and so they are, if there be no independent and all-controlling God. "I will show from Scripture," he says, impiously referring to the word of God for authority, just as Satan did in a similar instance, "that the decrees and commands of God, and consequently his providence, are nothing but the order of nature." (Tractatus Theologico Politicus, cap. vi,—as quoted by Dr. Norton in his *Latest Form of Infidelity*). Views similar to these are taken by some of our New England Transcendentalists; so that R. W. Emerson and Theodore Parker deny all inspirations and miracles, and though the latter continues to preach and even to pray, the former has wisely abandoned both as unphilosophical and useless.

This, then, is the God of the philosophers; a God without volition, without affection, without righteousness, without even personality,—a mere idea, a transcendental and pantheistic fancy; and not "the Lord our God," who is "above all, through all, and in all," the Father and Saviour of the human family. O! it is fearful to think, that it is an all-controlling and omnipotent God that the philosophers reject. "We are free," says one of them (Heine in the *Kirche-Zeitung*, Feb. 1839, quoted in the *Biblical Repertory*), and need no thundering tyrant. We are of age and need no fatherly care. We are not the handiwork of any great mechanic. Theism is a religion for slaves, for children, for Genevese, for watch-makers.

Do we start back with horror from the god of the philosophers? What then? Are we infidels still? Or do we accept the God of revelation? But he is just,—he punishes sin,—he has concluded all in unbelief. He demands the heart, the life, the all; and how can we give it unless we are forgiven, reconciled, and born again?—T.

quite obvious in their view, that God is worthy of love because he is God. But mankind generally are not frivolous, they are serious, and have proved it. Their religions, opposed to the principle we have recognized, do not bind man to God; they do not breathe the spirit of love, they do not inspire it nor propagate it; they rather propagate dread of the name of God, and clearly testify what, in our present condition of uncertainty and perplexity, is our natural instinct and inevitable tendency. Enough exists to compel these presumptuous men, at least to doubt, whether it is natural to love God. But let them retire within themselves, and interrogate their own thoughts. They speak of loving God; but do they know well what it is to love God? Do they reflect that God requires that he should be loved as God. There are terrors, there are abysses in that single word; a world intervenes between their thoughts and the truth. That pagan philosopher was more serious than they, and knew better the real conditions of humanity, who, either with indifference or grief, I know not which, exclaimed, "It is impossible to love God."

But is the world, let them proceed to say, is the world so worthy of love, that it ought rather than God to possess our hearts? Is the world more attractive than God.

If such were the question here, the intellect has already decided it; but the will does not immediately follow. The intellect is prompt, very prompt; it seizes, at a single glance, eternal verities; but the flesh is slow, and lingers behind. In our present condition, we do not need to be told, detach yourselves from the world, to be able to love God; but cleave to God, to be able to detach yourselves from the world. The attraction of the world is always experienced we feel it without an effort of the will; it is in resisting it that we must use our will. But the attraction of God in our actual situation, is felt only by our intellect, and penetrates no ther. We must first of all love God, which depends not on our will, because we cannot love an object in which we do not find our happiness. God must reveal himself to us as the supreme happiness, and not merely as the supreme perfection and the sovereign law. Even then a great number, perhaps, will not love him; but certain it is, that before knowing him in this character, none will love him; and if any one among men is capable of loving, he

will love him henceforth or never. He certainly will love him who, haunted by the recollection of his transgressions, overwhelmed by the pressure of the law, consumed with sorrow for his lost inheritance, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, that is, for God himself, when he sees him revealed, with all the characteristics of certainty, as a God merciful and gracious, a father, and not a judge, nay, more than a father, as a compassionate, devoted, and tender brother!

Either the human heart is incapable, from its nature, of feeling love, or that man will feel it who, enveloped in ignominy as a garment, has seen the God of glory descending even to him, to seek him in the depths of his disgrace; who, from the gloom and sorrow in which his conscience kept him plunged, has seen himself transported into a region of light and happiness; who, in respect to himself, has seen verified that amazing language of the prophet, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted;" who has seen,—O mystery, O miracle!—his God travelling by his side, in the rugged path of life; nay, voluntarily assuming the burden which was crushing him; a God humbled, a God weeping, a God anguished, a God dying![1] That long contest, if I may dare to say it, that agony of God for generations, that painful birth by which humanity was brought forth to the life of heaven, has been revealed to him in the ancient dispensation; he has been shown the very steps of God impressed upon the dust of ages, and mingled with the

[1] The translator must here take the liberty of repeating what has been already said in a note to the discourse on the Genius of the Gospel, p. 84, to which he would refer his readers, and remind them that where our author refers to God as "weeping, anguished, and dying;" he refers to "God manifest in the flesh," in others words, to Jesus Christ as human and divine. It is expressly said by the prophet, with regard to the infinite Jehovah himself, that, "in all their afflictions he was afflicted;" and it may not be as unphilosophical as some persons imagine, to represent the Divine Mind as sympathizing in the profoundest manner, with the struggles and sufferings of humanity. There is deeper meaning than rationalists wot of in the words of the apostle, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But *God* commendeth *his love* towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." We are said to die when body and spirit separate; but the spirit does not perish. It sympathizes in the agony of dissolution, but it lives on, as perfect as ever. So the Divinity in Jesus Christ may have sympathized, in a manner inexplicable to us, with the anguish of his death, and yet lived on, in immutable perfection and blessedness.—T.

footprints of the human race; but at the trace which that God has left on the rock of Calvary, the rock of his heart is broken, the vail of his understanding torn away; and what he could never think of without temerity, he thenceforth conceives as necessary, that if God has thus loved humanity, he ought to love it as God has done, that is to say, with the same spirit, and in the same manner. What, then, will he do? None will ever love God, or that man will love him; that man will never love God, or he will love him from this hour. Who can conceive of any means of producing love superior to this? What could God, yes God himself do more? What could he give, after having given himself? That man, then, has only to believe in order to love; and because he loves, the works he will thenceforth perform shall be works of God.

On this we make two remarks; firstly, that all the works he would have done, without that love, will be sanctified by means of it; secondly, that he will do works he would never have done without it. For it must be confessed, that while the death of Jesus Christ has created no duty absolutely new, while all that is binding since his advent was binding before,—for God is the God of all times; it is yet certain that the feeling with reference to our duties, and the vivid conception of their nature, were not the same in fallen man as they were after God had added, if I may venture thus to express myself, to his nature as God, the nature also of man. The commandment, then, according to the expression of Jesus Christ, is old and new; old in itself, new in us. The morality of Christians is not like that of the men of the world; it is so little like it, that those who frankly recognize and fully observe it, form, in the midst of mankind in general, a peculiar race, and, as it were, a new order of humanity. It is so little like it, that those who profess it are inconceivable to those who do not profess it, and the most common life, if in other respects Christian, fails not to exhibit, in certain traits, an extraordinary and mysterious principle, the name of which no one knows but he who possesses it. (Rev., xix, 12.) However high the capacity of the natural man may be raised, there are virtues which are found only in the practice of Christians, sacrifices of which Christians only are capable. Why? Because in their very faith, in that *work of God* of which our Saviour speaks, is comprised a sacrifice more profound, more

entire than all others, a sacrifice in which, by anticipation, all others are consummated. Love which springs from faith is deeper and purer, more inexhaustible and immortal than all other love; for while all other love finds its limits in the nature of its object, the love which has God for its object will in vain seek limits in that which has none. We never devote ourselves, without reserve, to a finite object; for what finite object can compensate us for the sacrifice of ourselves? Must it not, at the very least, leave us glory, which is approbation from without, or that internal approbation, which is still glory? But between God and the creature that loves him, there can be no reserve; for God is either all goodness and all glory, or he is not; and if he is not, we could not love him; but if he is, we can sacrifice ourselves, for there is nothing to lose with him. What thenceforth can prevent us from giving him every thing, and him from giving us back ourselves? I have said ourselves, for we are more truly in him than in ourselves; it is no more we that live, but Christ that liveth in us; and our life, to use the language of Paul, is hid with Christ in God.

XX.

THE WORK OF GOD.

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."—JOHN, vi, 28, 29.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

WE have said enough to the Jews, enough to that numerous class who persist in seeking the foundation of their hope in works. Let us now turn to Christians, and, after having shown that the condition of life and salvation is found only in faith, let us endeavour to prove that this faith is a work. But this word suggests a difficulty at once.

And when, it will be said to us, did believing become a labour; when did it become a work? Do we not every day hear these two terms, *believing* and *acting*, opposed to each other? Do we not continually hear you speaking of men who believe, and do not act? And when St. Paul tells us that man is saved by faith and not by works, and St. James declares that faith without works is dead, do not these two apostles make works and faith entirely distinct?[1] Besides, who, when asked respecting the nature of faith,

[1] Let no one take exception to this discourse from the peculiar use the author makes of the term "work." By this he simply means a voluntary act, and hence he insists that the exercise of faith, involving, as it does, an act of volition and affection, is a real work. This position he sustains beyond the possibility of refutation. But he rejects as heartily as the most rigid Calvinist could desire, the idea that faith is a legal work, or in any sense a work of merit, on the ground of which a sinner might claim salvation as a right. Indeed he maintains that it is just the opposite, and involves a renunciation of all merit.—T.

will call it an action, and not rather a disposition or state of the mind? We say an involuntary state, since, if it depends upon us to examine or not to examine before believing, to act or not to act after having believed, it does not absolutely depend on us to believe or not to believe. Some one may propose to prove to me that a certain substance is the remedy for a certain disease with which I am affected. I may refuse my attention to the proofs of that truth, and such refusal is a voluntary act. I may consent to hear them, and such consent is also a voluntary act. In fine, after having permitted myself to be convinced, I may use or not use the remedy the efficiency of which has been proved to me, and there, again, I will and act. But to believe or not to believe in proofs communicated to me, is a thing in which my will has no part. It is a fact and not an action. And if it is sometimes said that such an one would not believe, what is this but saying that he could not, or rather that he would not listen to his reason and his conscience, which would have compelled him to believe? Why, then, has Jesus Christ said, that "the work of God is believing," which is precisely the same thing as saying, that believing is a work, that it is a determination of a will?

Such is the difficulty we propose to remove. We might confine ourselves to a single reply, and it would be peremptory; for if faith is not a work, how could it be commanded; and if commanded, why is it not a work? Who would think of commanding any thing which did not depend upon the will? But this reply would only reduce to silence those who may have provoked it; that is all. At bottom it does not edify, and we wish to edify. For this purpose we go further into the matter, and say, without fear, taking our departure from the words of Jesus Christ himself, that the

[1] The author would willingly say that faith, irrespective of the righteousness of Christ, is nothing. But it is the glory of this act of the soul, that it makes the righteousness of Christ its own. It does not passively receive it, or acquiesce in it, but embraces it, with a strong and tender affection, and by this means incorporates it into its own nature. It is thus not merely a voluntary but a holy act. This, and this only, is the faith that justifies, and which is imputed to us for righteousness. Without it no one can be saved, on which ground it may properly be styled the condition of salvation. It is not however, a meritorious, but a natural condition. The righteousness of Christ is "unto and upon all them that believe," and upon them only. See the author's note at the close of the discourse.—T.

faith which is not a work cannot be imputed to us, cannot absolutely save us.[1]

On this point we appeal to the consciousness of all. We do as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does, when he exclaims, "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin." (Heb., x, 4.) Does he reason, or invoke any external testimony? No, he simply affirms; "it is impossible," is his language. It is a self-evident truth, written in the consciousness of every man, which none would venture to dispute. And we, too, after his example, say it is impossible that what is not righteousness should be imputed as righteousness. It is impossible that an involuntary act should become the condition of salvation. It is impossible that a pure and simple acquiescence in proofs should bear the slightest relation to the possession of celestial happiness and the enjoyment of God himself. It is impossible that God should ever have said, "Believe in any way and in any spirit that Jesus Christ is he whom I have sent, and that belief shall secure your everlasting life."

We say that such a thing is impossible, because it is written, on the one hand, that we are justified by faith, and on the other, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But in order that these two declarations should not contradict each other, it is necessary that holiness should be included in faith, in the same manner that a plant is included in its germ. In other words it is necessary that faith should be sanctifying. But how should it be so if we receive it only by the intellect, and not by the heart, or as if it were a matter of indifference, provided we believed in some way or another? In such a case, faith would not justify by making us holy, but without any such influence; it would justify whatever were its object. Faith in the earth's rotundity would be as beneficial as faith in Christ crucified. The former, it is evident, has no relation to the heart, does not affect the conscience, puts in motion none of its moral forces, leaves the whole interior of man in a state of slumber. But that makes no difference; for, according to the system in question, it is the mere abstract fact of faith, and not its object, which saves us; and the former of these objects is entirely suitable for such a purpose. But if faith does not justify except when it sanctifies, it justifies by virtue of its object;

and if that object does not sanctify, except so far as we submit to it not only our intellect, but our heart, conscience, and will, in a word, all in us that is free, then assuredly is faith a work.

It will probably be said, that the object of Christian faith is such that it is impossible to believe without feeling, in some degree, the virtue inherent in that object. We reply, alas, no it is not impossible. We do not undervalue that virtue, and we are willing to suppose that a goodly number of those to whom it has been given without effort or examination, to believe, are, from that moment, born to a new life. And what is this but to say that faith has become a work in them, what, indeed, we claim it should be to produce the fruit of salvation? But how many there are who in their souls have not submitted to that necessary process! How many there are to whom Jesus Christ has been presented and demonstrated, but who have not believed, because in a certain sense, they would not believe, or to speak more accurately, would not examine the arguments and facts, which might have compelled them to believe. A work proceeding faith, or a work in the act of faith itself, work, action, volition, in one respect or another; we cannot withdraw faith from that condition, we cannot divest ourselves of that necessity.

We are here reminded that the faith of Abraham was imputed to him for righteousness. But what was it in reality that was thus imputed to him? Was it his having believed that God who had appeared to him with the irresistible proofs of his divinity was truly God? There was no choice in that, consequently no righteonsness. Will you then impute to the Hebrews as righteousness, their having believed that the manna which fell from heaven in the desert, that the cloud, at once luminous and dark, which went before them, that the sea elevating its waves like walls, on the right hand and on the left, attested the presence and protection of God? That were to confound, in both of these cases, faith with vision. No, faith on the part of Abraham begins at the moment when, through a visible sign, he believes in the invisible; at the moment when he goes under the command of God to meet the unknown, the uncertain, nay more, the impossible; for what more impossible than to immolate his own son? In these cases, there was no faith without previous sight; but subsequently to believe without seeing,

because sight had been enjoyed, to oppose the word of God to the most appalling, the most overwhelming appearances, to advance with assured step in the night, to plant a firm foot in the void,— is that a state or a work? Is that to act, or only to believe? To believe in this manner, is it not to obey? Yes, faith is the internal obedience of the conscience and the will. The faith of Abraham was then a work, and this was the reason why it could be imputed to him for righteousness.

To yield to proofs and authorities, which it would be impossible, even if we desired it, to resist, is not to believe but to see; it is to be forced, like Abraham, to recognize the voice of God in the vision, or like the Hebrews, the presence of God in the cloud. What in such a case, could be imputed to our will, is having given attention, if indeed we have done so, but not our having seen. Faith does not begin, except where volition begins, where the heart performs a part, where in a word there is action. Faith is then a work, or it is nothing. But every one understands how faith, that is, such a faith, can be imputed for righteonsness, but no one can comprehend how a simple state, by whatever name it may be called, can ever be designated as righteousness or unrighteousness; for righteousness is the will in order, unrighteousness is the will in disorder; it is ever the will, at least, in its internal action.

And let no one say that the question turns on comprehending or not comprehending. Such an idea may find its application in other circumstances, but it has nothing to do here. We affirm that the question does turn upon comprehending, and that this is one of the things which no one can believe without comprehending. I acknowledge, if religion were composed only of things comprehensible, it could not be the true religion; but neither would it be such if it were composed only of things incomprehensible; for religion is a virtue, it is a duty, or it is nothing; but where can there be a virtue without conscience, a duty without thought? Let every thing else in religion be incomprehensible, this at least cannot be such. Good cannot be good, nor can evil be evil, unless I recognize it as such. Take away this, and the very name of religion vanishes, nothing but fatality remains. Religion, it is true, must bind me to God, but through my convictions, through the acknowledgment of my conscience. Whatever binds me to God in any

other way is not religion, otherwise the animal abandoned to his instinct, the tree that bends under the wind, the star which revolves in the heavens, would possess religion as much as I, would in fact, be religious beings. If there is anything in religion I ought to comprehend, it is assuredly the duty which stands at the head of all my other duties, and gives birth to them all.

So far from regretting that faith is represented as a work, I would rejoice at it. I would lay it down as a principle, that faith in him whom God hath sent, in order to be imputed as righteousness, must be a work, or, that it may become such, and consequently would seek to discover how much of volition it includes or developes.

And to begin prior to the exercise of faith, or to the moment when we believe, let us acknowledge that it is even here a work, a good work, to examine an object of belief, when it is presented or proposed to us by persons worthy of respect, when it concerns our souls and God, that is to say, what is greatest in man, and greatest above man, in a word, when it has for its end our supreme interest, I mean our relations to God, and our eternal state. He who in such a case refuses to examine, does a work, and that work is bad; on the other hand, he who examines also does a work, and that work is good; he does not yet believe, but he has acted; work has preceded faith. Let us suppose him no longer an unbeliever or a doubter, but a man who believes. He holds for true, and we shall not enquire how he has been led to do so, that God has sent his Son into the world to save sinners. That I allow may be a faith of the intellect and of the head. It may be that this man has adopted that creed, either on hearsays or proofs, as he might have adopted one just the opposite, without feeling an interest in its contents; in the same manner that he has admitted, from arguments to which he could not reply, that the earth is a globe, and that it revolves around the sun. Such a condition of mind is certainly difficult to conceive in a man whom a serious interest in the concerns of his soul has induced to examine that great question; for if his examination has been earnest, will not his faith also be earnest? After all, such a condition is possible, it is to be met with; and there are not wanting persons, either perfectly indifferent to the character and contents of the religion they profess, or

who adopt the doctrine of salvation as one upon the whole agreeable and proper. If there are those who believe in this way, and would to God it were a mere supposition, their faith can have no more moral value than that of the man who believes in the roundness of the earth and its circular motion about the sun; and since the human mind absolutely refuses to admit that a faith without any moral quality can be the condition of salvation, these two classes of men are, in reference to their salvation, on the same level and in the same situation; and it appears no more absurd to say that one man will be saved for believing in the astronomical truth to which we have referred, than to pretend that he will be saved for having believed, with all the power of his intellect, in the truth of the Gospel, and the advent of Jesus Christ. The first of these beliefs is morally as valuable as the other; and if in any respect the second even somewhat excels the other, it is perhaps because its object is more inconceivable. How many persons do we see, especially in the church of Rome, who make the merit of faith to reside in believing what is difficult, so that the more incredible the things which they believe, the greater is their faith, and the better their title to salvation.

But if there are many who believe thus, there are those who, receiving the same truth, believe it very differently. In their case, to believe in salvation by grace is to consent to be saved by grace, whether that consent accompany or follow, or has even preceded belief, properly speaking. What is certain in this case is, that belief, unless associated with the consent of the heart and of the will, is only a mere belief, and by no means faith. Such consent is the essential, the capital element in faith; so that if any one, without a knowledge of Jesus Christ, had felt his need of a Saviour, had sought after him, and, so to speak, had eventually accepted him, he would possess the essential conditions of true faith, and would receive the benefit of it.[1] Thus the distinct belief in the mystery of godliness, inasmuch as it is only a belief, may remain without effect in the case of him who possesses it; while the disposition of heart which would receive Jesus Christ, were he known, may have

[1] This is to be regarded as a supposition or hypothesis, for the sake of argument and illustration. Still such a case may actually exist. Who shall set limits to the power of the Spirit, or the compassion of God?—T.

all the characteristics and all the value of real faith ; for the latter is a work, and the former is not.

This is a work assuredly, and because it is a work, it is a work of God. What in fact is included in such a belief? If what it includes does not characterize it as a work of God, no human work can merit that name. Indeed, what must join itself to every other work to make it a work of God, forms the very foundation of this. There is a mysterious salt, without which every work becomes corrupted; well, the work of which we are speaking is precisely that mysterious and preservative salt. What is it that corrupts all our works? Pride and self-righteousness ; pride, which persuades us that our own personal powers are sufficient for the task imposed on us ; self-righteousness, which ascribes the merit of them to ourselves, and robs God of it ; I say, pride and self-righteousness, which prevent us from believing that we need God's favour, and are dependent upon his grace, make of each man his own God, and erect an altar to him in his own heart. Such is the concealed atheism of every man, before the grace of God has opened his eyes. It is this which mingles itself with all our works, and even with all our religious acts. Such is the atheism of many pretended Christians, less Christians, perhaps, on that account, than many pagans. But we ask, once more, what does the faith in him whom God has sent include? What does it suppose, if not the complete renunciation of our pretensions, the acknowledgment of our state of guilt and condemnation, the confession of our inability to save ourselves, the solemn abdication of our merits, an entire resignation of ourselves to the true author of our salvation ; in a word, God put into his own place, and we into ours, God on the throne, and we in the dust? Is believing in this way not doing a work, the first, the most indispensable of works, the work which is the source of all other works, in a word, the work of works? And are we not justified in claiming, that if this is a work, it is also, and for the same reason, a work of God?

But this is not merely a work, it is a labour, an effort. Suppose one of two cases. Suppose that the soul is thus stripped before or after believing, no matter which, it is necessary in every case that this self-renunciation should take place voluntarily ; and after as well as before, before as well as after, it is an act of the will. It

is not necessarily comprised in mere belief, it does not necessarily follow it; and since in reality, to speak with exactness, it may be accomplished by one who has not yet believed, so may one believe without having accomplished it.[1] Whether it be before or after the possession of certainty, it is a special task, as painful as it is indispensable. To strip ourselves, under the hand of God, of all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and acknowledge ourselves sinners and undone, will cost the flesh a combat more or less long, more or less sanguinary. The victory is so difficult, secured by means so foreign to us, and in a way so mysterious, that no one who has gained it would be unwilling to declare that to him faith is a work of God in every sense of the term, that is to say, the action of God in and by his own.

It is thus we may comprehend how faith is commanded as a work, and presented as a duty,—I acknowledge as the most difficult of duties. But some one, for want of reflection, may say, Why is the most difficult at the commencement? To which we reply, Why should not the most difficult be at the commencement? What earnest work is there of which the first steps are not the most difficult? But why do we speak here of a commencement, as if there were in reality any thing beyond it; and as if this were not the only work, and all others but the simple consequences or applications of it; as if any work could be done independent of this first work; as if any work, separated from this fundamental one, were not as difficult as itself; as if each particular work did not include that work of God, spoken of by Jesus Christ, and as if it were not necessarily present in every true work of God? For there is only one alternative; either your works are done in the spirit of pride and self-righteousness,—and such, I admit, are less difficult than those my text proposes to you,—or, on the other hand, you must allow that they are works of God, and therefore contain the great work of which my texts speaks, that is, the entire renunciation of the natural man; and if they contain it, how can they be said to be less difficult? They are that very work under different forms, and with different applications. Jesus Christ has truly

1 The author here evidently speaks of a formal belief, in which there is necessarily no act of self-renunciation. This, therefore, may precede or follow such a belief. It may be accomplished with or without it.—T.

said, that there is in reality only one work, which is, from the heart to believe on Him whom God hath sent.

We have said that the first act or work which is included in a true faith, is an internal self-renunciation, a voluntary substitution of the righteousness and power of God for our own power and righteousness; for we cannot really put on Christ, without first stripping off self. But is there not something more in faith? Faith embraces Jesus Christ, in his entire character. But Jesus Christ is at once the most absolute grace and the most perfect law; so that to believe in him is to embrace a grace and a law. And by what name but that of faith do you call that confidence, with which the Christian accepts the law from his Saviour, whatever may be the difficulty, or the danger connected with it, and that too, simply because it is the law of the Saviour? Those commandments which revolt the flesh he accepts; those sacrifices to which he sees no limits, he adopts; those combats which form a part of his profession, he anticipates; and those difficulties, to which he would have hitherto yielded, he meets, even at the moment when he has a more profound and vivid sense than ever of his personal weakness. Is there, in one of the dogmas he has accepted, any thing more mysterious than this obedience, in some sense, supernatural? Is there in grace any thing more obscure than the law, I mean the law as he understands it, and thenceforth accepts? Where are the powers at his disposal? Where will he find the means to be used, in such a case? What miraculous bridge will be stretched between his duty and its accomplishment? He does not see, but he hopes. For if faith be what it is styled in the Epistle to the Hebrews, a vivid representation of things hoped for, a demonstration of things not seen, is that confidence he feels in his Surety faith, or is it not? Why do I speak of hope? Before even hoping, he must decide; before believing in victory, he must believe in duty; he embraces it with closed eyes; he cleaves, in duty, to what he loves the least; and thus he better recognizes his natural vocation, which is to combat and sacrifice self. But what is believing in this way, except to perform an act of will? What is such a faith but a work in all the force of the term, and a work which does not differ from others, except that it is done in the solitude of the heart, and with God only for a witness?

Let us resume. We have supposed a man who, seriously penetrated with the interests of his soul, and the great importance of eternal things, examines before believing,—which is itself a work; a man who, in submitting his mind to the truths of the Gospel, consents to the humiliation they require, and the self-sacrifice they impose,—which also is a work; a man, in fine, who, in advance, voluntarily embraces all the consequences of grace, that is, all the duties of the Christian life,—and this, furthermore, has the character of a work. What are all these combined? Faith. What, indeed, is faith without them. What is faith, reduced to an intellectual conviction of the truth of the Gospel, but a naked acceptance of salvation as salvation? Is this still faith? If so we should be justified in saying that there are two faiths which equally justify, equally save; which is the same thing as to say, that salvation is to be had at two unequal prices, and on two different conditions. In the case of one, on condition of believing, upon any authority, that a certain fact has taken place; in that of others, on condition of having chosen the truth, having submitted to it their heart as well as intellect, and having transferred to God entirely the confidence they had in themselves. The first of these acts, in which the heart has nothing to do, is imputed for righteousness; the second, in which it bears so great a part, is also equally imputed for righteousness. The faith which does not depend upon the will is commanded, as well as that of which the will is the organ. Faith passive and servile has the same value as faith active and free; consequently the obedience of servitude is equal, in moral worth, to the obedience of freedom; knowledge is equal to love; the fact to the action. We do not accept this doctrine, because we find it neither in our conscience nor in the Gospel. We acknowledge that every beginning of what is right is good, in the hands of God, that passive and servile faith may become one that is active and free. But until this is the case, we claim that it is not faith, at least not living faith; and not merely because faith without works is dead, but because the faith which is not a work is dead.

We confess that we feel ourselves well fortified, with such a view, against the objections of sceptics, who, for ages, have declared themselves scandalized with a doctrine which seems to ab-

solve man from the necessity of being virtuous, and even of using his will, because it imposes upon him, as the only condition of salvation, a mere opinion of the intellect. Shall we be equally fortified against the objections of Christians, those we mean who understand differently from us the doctrine of salvation by faith? It will be left for you to judge.

Perhaps they will say to us at the outset, the language of the Gospel is more simple than yours. It does not say to us, Believe in such a manner; but, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And if it speak so, what then? What does that make against our position? How does it prove that the object of faith is every thing, and its nature nothing? It is, doubtless, necessary, in order to enjoy the benefits of faith, to believe in its object. It will, also, frequently happen, that he who has believed, no matter how, will not remain there. His faith in a matter of so great importance as salvation by grace, will not leave him always indifferent. As many others have set out from the conviction of their misery to embrace with ardour the promise of that redemption, the contemplation of so great a blessing will lead him, also, to feel, what without it he never would have felt, his misery and his guilt. In the majority of cases, then, it is already much to have believed by the intellect or by the heart, with or without the concurrence of the will. We do not deny this; and certainly we are not surprised that the Holy Spirit, who knows what is in the soul, and what reaction the unexpected offer of salvation may exert upon the conscience, has said, by the mouth of the apostles and of Jesus Christ himself, believe, only believe, and ye shall be saved. But would this be saying, that faith of any kind would, in reality, be imputed for righteousness? Who will dare to claim it? And can it be that on the nature of faith, the Gospel says nothing more than this, and never makes it a work? We will not repeat what we have already said, that what is not a work, and does not spring from the will, could not be commanded. We will not avail ourselves of our text, where faith in him whom God has sent is expressly called a work. But how many passages in the Gospel directly or indirectly establish this truth. And to confine ourselves only to one, which, by way of analogy, will suggest a host of others, what do you think of those persons who are represented as receiv-

ing the word into good and honest hearts? What is that good and honest heart, if not a heart sincere and earnest? And if such, according to our Lord, is the only soil which bears fruit, how can we doubt that faith, planted in the intellect only, should be a faith sterile and dead?

But faith, it is said, is the work of God, and we make it the work of man; it is a grace, and we make it a merit; and thus attack the Gospel in its essential and fundamental character. What does this objection amount to? When in evangelical teaching were the terms work and merit synonymous? And when was recommending a man to do works recommending him to procure merit? Cannot we, then, insist on any duty, or call for any sacrifice, without replacing on its pedestal the idol of self-righteousness, which the Gospel abhors, and which Jesus came to cast down? The consequence is horrible, but inevitable. If, in giving to faith the name of a work, we have brought an accusation against the doctrine of the freeness of salvation, all other works, all Christian morality, bring against it the same accusation. If to represent the will as intervening, in faith, is to maintain that man can of himself do any thing, those who have represented all works of morality as voluntary acts, have affirmed that man can do every thing. If, on the contrary, they have spoken thus of morality in general, without incurring a reproach so grave, we shall incur it no more than they. Besides, the reserve they attach to every appeal which they make to the human will for the fulfilment of the law, we attach with as much right and propriety to the appeal we make to men to believe on him whom God hath sent. For if, after having said to Christians, "work," they add, "for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do," we, on our part, after saying to unbelievers, "believe," add, "none can say that Jesus Christ is Lord but by the Holy Spirit." It is God who commands, and it is God, also, that gives us the power to believe.

What, I pray you, is that work which we make the condition of salvation? Have you duly considered it? That work is essentially the abandonment of all merit, the renunciation of all salvation coming from works. That work is the exclusion of works as a title to the Divine favour. What! have we drawn from such a source as this? Have we merely transplanted and not extirpated

error? Have we impoverished ourselves, only to grow richer in reality? Do not permit yourselves to be deceived or terrified by words. One fact remains; man will never be saved as long as he believes he has power to do it by his own works; nay, he will never be saved until he renounces the desire of being saved by his own works. Not that renunciation will save him; for such an act supposes that he has nothing in himself, absolutely nothing by which he can be saved;—but is such a renunciation a condition of salvation, or is it not? Yes, it is a condition of salvation. Is such renunciation an action, a work, or is it not? Yes, it is an action, a work. A work, then, is presented in the Gospel, as a condition of salvation; but like all works, and more clearly than all works, it is a grace, a gift, and not a merit. It is, we repeat it, the work of God, in every sense which can be given to that expression; in the sense that it is according to the mind of God, and in the sense also, that it is God that works it by us, and in us.

If the reproach of injecting into the bosom of religion the impure doctrine of self-righteousness and merit in works, falls with propriety on any one, it is upon those who refuse to faith the character we ascribe to it. It is upon those who make faith a servile and sordid work. For what can be more sordid and servile than to claim salvation, and the eternal society of God, as the price of a passive acquiescence in a certain doctrine, without putting ourselves in fellowship with it, and in passing, with bended head, like slaves, beneath the yoke of mere knowledge.[1] This is not less a work than the one we propose, but it is a work without freedom, without morality, without religion. My brethren, you must consent to acknowledge this; on whatever side you turn, it is a work you find there; but in the one case, it is a work of God, in the other, a work of man. A faith which is neither the one nor the other, cannot be conceived, cannot be found.

But we confound, it will be further said, profound and sacred distinctions. We commingle elements which the Gospel has carefully separated; we carry disorder and confusion into that beautiful economy, which, placing faith on one side, and works on the other, has traced limits which it does not become any one to ef-

[1] The author's allusion here is to the custom of incorporating captives into the Roman armies, by passing them under the yoke.—T.

face. If we have effaced them, acknowledge that the words of our text might furnish our excuse. Who can be surprised that once at least, some one has given to faith the name of a work, a name which our Lord himself has thus formally given it? But no, we have effaced nothing. The distinction exists. It has even up to a certain point, the quality of an opposition; but it does not depend upon a word. Even if faith should be a work, it is not less a work distinct from those which are conceived and accomplished without it. Let any one call it a work as long as he pleases, it will be no less faith; it will be no less the condition of works, the beginning of works, the most difficult of works. It will no less remain the strait gate that must be entered, the condition that must be fulfilled, the victory which must be gained, the yoke which must be borne before you can do the works of God. And if you accede to all this, the distinction subsists, the truth is saved. After which we shall admit without difficulty, that it may be useful, and perhaps the matter has been thus ordained, that it may be necessary that this distinction should have the form with which it is invested in the Gospel, and that the difference of the words should mark the difference of the things. But he who looks into the matter more narrowly perceives that the Christian life is one and indivisible in its nature and tendency; and he only who can separate a river from its source, and show us where the source ends, and the river begins, can also separate faith from the life that flows from it, and show us where faith ends and work begins. Let the river expand or dig itself a deeper channel, let it flow with a scarcely perceptible motion, or leap in cataracts, let it reach the ocean by a course the most direct, or by a thousand various windings, let it confine itself to a single channel, or pour, through many different channels, its abounding waters; is it not ever, whether near or at a distance from its source, the same river, the same water? Spiritual life is also a river, in which the mass of water, the direction, the channels, every thing in fact but the river may vary. That water, springing up into everlasting life, like a river, may change its name in its course, as a river often changes its name. Now it is repentance, now conversion, now sanctification; all these names distinguish the places and times of the same fact; sanctification is already in repentance, and sanctification is a conversion that per-

petuates itself; conversion is a sanctification begun, and faith, according to the idea we have given of it, encloses, only to manifest at a later time, but really encloses, all the elements of the Christian life. Is not the whole river in its source? Who that has seen the source has not seen the river? In the same way, the whole life is in faith, and he who has seen faith has seen the life. Faith is not a separate work, it is every work, every work of God. Might not the man who holds an acorn in his hand say, I hold in my hand an oak? For that acorn is all that is necessary in itself to become an oak.

Let us leave these reasonings and images, and open the New Testament. We must absolutely falsify it, to maintain that faith is not altogether the work of God, or refuse to acknowledge, that if imputed for righteousness, it is because it possesses a righteous character. Do you not say that faith without works is dead? Do you not say, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord? Do you not say, that every one shall be punished or rewarded according to the good or the evil he has done in the body? Ah, then, what account do you give of the fatted calf killed for the prodigal son, and the joy of angels, greater over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance? It will serve no good purpose to reply, that they have done works since their conversion. Have the others ceased to do them? Have not the others done them for a long time? Why, then, is he who labours in the vineyard from the eleventh hour treated as he who laboured from the first? Why, for we must say the whole, why have not the just, who have spent a long life, more to hope than those who, having lived fewer years, have, with the same zeal, done fewer works? Why, if it is not that faith is the work entire, the whole work of which particular works are the development or manifestation? Why if it is not that salvation depends upon what we *are*, and not upon what we *do*, and that the times and opportunities God gives us for action, are destined essentially to make us *become* what we ought to *be*? O how important is this lesson, since it is the last that Jesus gave us, and since he chose to give it, in the solemn hour of his passion. It was on the cross, and when he was just about to yield his pure spirit to God, that he said to the thief crucified at his side (Luke,

xxiii, 43), "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise!" Yet he was a robber! And you have said, without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and every one shall receive according to the good or evil he has done in the body. But you add, he believed, for he said (v. 42), "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," —and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. But it is you also who have said that faith without works is dead; and what works had that man done, if not the works of the devil? Said Jesus Christ, on one occasion, to the multitude, "I have done many good works among you, for which of these good works do ye stone me?" And we are tempted to say to the Saviour, That man has done many bad works; Lord, for which of these, dost thou give him heaven? Ah, my brethren, it is that an instant may have the value of a whole life, and a single movement of the heart may equal in value a long career of good works; it is that Jesus Christ who read the heart of that man, saw therein all the good works he would have done had he lived, and imputed them to him, as if he had done them: it is that if he had not done every thing he would have *done*, he is by his faith, from that moment, all that he ought *to be;* it is that, if he had not done works, he had done *the work*, which is to believe in Him whom God hath sent.

"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" That request comprises two ideas. I have need of a Saviour,—O Jesus, be that Saviour! To use the second of these expressions one must positively believe in Jesus Christ, he must know that he is come, or that he will come. On this account we say, happy they who have seen and have believed! But for a man simply to say, I have need of a Saviour; and further to add, my burden is greater than I can bear; Lord, be merciful to me a sinner, and if thou canst forgive, forgive; in a word to feel his transgressions, to deplore them, to cry to God from the depths of his sorrow, to refuse for that internal disease all the dangerous remedies and deceitful palliatives of superstition, to embrace, were it offered, the pardon of God as his only resource, does he necessarily require a knowledge of the promise, or to have heard the name of Jesus pronounced? We cannot believe it. The precursor of the Messiah, the prophet of repentance, John the Baptist, comparing his ministry with that of Jesus, called himself *a voice of the earth;* as if he had been sent

to give a voice to the sentiments which were ever on the earth, and which formed themselves of their own accord in the bosom of the natural man before the advent, nay, before the anticipation of the sovereign Mediator.[1] But these sentiments, which are of the earth, are the same as those we have described, although they manifest themselves in very few individuals; and the distinct knowledge of Jesus Christ is the only means of awakening them in the majority of men. We ascribe them unhesitatingly to grace, to the influence of the Divine Spirit, who has always breathed wherever he would, and has never permitted himself to be bound; that is to say, we believe that in all times and in all places there have been involuntary witnesses to the great truth which lies at the foundation of all evangelical truths, namely, the conviction of our first fall, and the inability to raise ourselves without the interposition of God himself.[2] Well, then, on what elevation will you place the

[1] This idea is probably derived from John, iii, 31.—T.

[2] It is by no means difficult to prove that some of the more pure and thoughtful minds among the ancient heathen philosophers had a just sense of their own ignorance and sinfulness, and longed for a purer and better state of things, nay more, gave some vague intimations, and, as it were, natural predictions of a future glorious Deliverer. Plato, in his *Theætetos*, as his readers are well aware, discourses largely of a former "incorrupt and happy condition of the human race," a sort of golden age, in which "God familiarly conversed with men, taking care of them as he does a flock," but that growing "terrestrial and vicious," intermingling "the divine nature" yet remaining in them, with much "deadly evil," as he frequently calls the depravity of man, "came to shame and ruin." A passage in one of his *Dialogues* represents Socrates meeting one of his disciples, and attempting to convince him that he knows neither what to pray for, nor how to pray. He then proceeds to say, "It seems best to me that we expect quietly, nay, it is absolutely necessary that we wait with patience, till such time as we can learn certainly how we ought to behave towards God and man. Till that time arrives, it may be safer to forbear offering sacrifices, as you know not whether they are acceptable to God or not." In another passage in his *Theætetos*, he remarks, that "Our recovery from corruption must be by a speedy flight to God;" and one of his followers commenting on this, says, that "this flight is not to depart from the earth, but that we become, even while we are on earth, righteous and holy and wise." "I agree with you, Socrates," is the reply which Plato, in his Dialogues, puts into the mouth of one of his disciples, to the argument of Socrates on the immortality of the soul, "that to discover the certain truth of these things in this life is impossible, or at least very difficult. We ought, therefore, by all means, to do one of two things; either by hearkening to instruction, and by our own diligent study, to find out the truth; or if that be impossi-

souls in whom the truth revealed itself before the great truth of the mediation of Jesus Christ was made known to them, the souls, which, as much as was possible for them, believed before they had seen, in comparison with those who, having known Jesus Christ, believe in him with a literal and passive faith, not with a free consent, but with a servile belief, and who, to express the whole in a word, do not embrace him, and adorn themselves with his merits and glory? Which of these, the first or the second, best fulfil the conditions of true faith? To whom preferably will their faith be imputed for righteousness? To those whose faith is complete but dead, or to those whose faith is incomplete, but living? To those whose faith is a work, or to those whose faith is not a work? To those who have not known the Saviour, but have desired him, or to those who, knowing him, do not desire nor value him? To

ble, then to fix on that which appears to human reason best and most probable, and to make that our raft while we sail this stormy sea, unless one could have a still more sure and safe guide, such as a divine revelation would be, on which we might make the voyage of life, as in a ship that fears no danger." It is well known that Plutarch, who lived about the middle of the first century, but had no acquaintance with Christianity, made a wonderful approximation to the truth, and possessed certain traits of character which as we may suppose would have prepared him to welcome the Gospel. "Would that an apostle could have visited him in his youth," says a writer in the Christian Review for December 1844, "and commended to him the gospel of Christ. What a new and heavenly light might have shone around him in respect to the great problem which he mentions on the twenty-ninth page (Delay of the Deity in the Punishment of the Wicked), 'It is likely that the soul of every sinner revolves these things within herself, and reasons, How, escaping from the memory of her iniquities, and delivering herself from the consciousness of them, and being made pure, she may, anew, live another life.' We do not wonder that a bishop of the Greek church in the middle of the eleventh century was prompted to pour forth the following prayer: 'If indeed, O my Christ, thou mayest be willing to deliver from thy threatening any of the heathen, deliver for me Plato and Plutarch; for in word and in conduct they both are the nearest conformed to thy laws. But if they knew not that thou art God of the universe, here is need only of thy goodness, on account of which thou art willing to save all gratuitously.'"

Nor is it among the heathen only of ancient times that we find individuals thus "hungering and thirsting after righteousness." Though in general debased and hardened beyond expression, some of them really seem to have been taught their need of pardon and sanctification by the Spirit of God. The Karens appear to be a people "prepared for the Lord," and some of them have come long journeys to meet the missionary of the cross, in order to hear respecting "the true God and eternal life."—T.

those who believe in a Saviour, or to those who believe in their need of a Saviour? Your consciences will pronounce.

Ah, if long before the advent of Christ, there existed some such men, and in the present day, beyond the limits of Christendom, they are still found; if there are some whom the vague rumour of a Saviour has caused to emerge from their forests and jungles, through a thousand dangers to meet the messengers of that unknown Saviour, if Christian missionaries have found that noble want of expiation, of mercy, and of reconciliation with God and with conscience already awakened, and ready to break out, even among savages, to whom we have long hesitated to give the name of men, what shall we think of that multitude of persons, born in the visible church, before whose eyes, to speak after the manner of the apostles, Jesus Christ has been vividly pourtrayed, and who, entire strangers to that ardour with which those less favoured embrace him without knowing him, disdain, reject, and insult him, exclaiming with the unhappy Jews, Away with him! away with him! crucify him! crucify him! We will not have this man to reign over us,—we have no king but Cæsar, we have no king but that proud ME, that imperious Cæsar, that cruel despot who drags us through the dust of the world, and the mire of sin, to the threshold of eternity!—Who speaks of examining? We will not examine, for we will not believe! Ah, happier in their humiliation and anguish, are those who would believe, but cannot; those who cherish an inextinguishable thirst for righteousness; those who feel that in the privation of all things, they would have every thing if they had God; those who daily strip off their own merits, without, however, being able to reclothe themselves, for he with whose righteousness they might clothe themselves, has not yet been revealed to them; because some obstacle springing from within, or from without, has thus far hindered them from believing on Jesus Christ. One day they will believe; God will not leave incomplete a work, the better part of which is already accomplished in them. But that painful trial may yet be prolonged; the intercessions of the church must labour with them, and contend for them; from our temples and closets, those who have been delivered before them, must cry to the great Deliverer, "They believe, O Lord, they believe; help thou their unbelief!"

NOTE TO THE FOREGOING DISCOURSE.

We doubt not some ideas and expressions in the above discourse have startled some readers. After all, they may be scriptural and just. It is quite clear that our author fully believes that no man can be justified except on the ground of our Saviour's merits. But those merits cannot become ours except conditionally. A certain state or attitude of mind and heart is requisite for their reception and enjoyment. This is produced by the Holy Spirit. It may exist among those who have never distinctly known Christ. We say simply that it *may* exist; for it cannot be affirmed dogmatically. God alone can determine a question of this nature. But supposing it to exist, and moreover, regarding its existence as highly probable, it would be equivalent to the *faith* of those who really know the Saviour; and in a general way, might be said to be reckoned for righteousness. At all events, it would fit those, who had experienced it, to receive Jesus Christ the instant he was made known to them. Were they introduced to heaven, they would immediately fall down at his feet, and adore him as their Lord and Saviour. Let it be particularly observed also, that our author does not describe this as a natural state of mind, but as a preternatural one, that is to say, one produced by the secret action of the Holy Spirit upon the mind. So that such a supposition does not violate any principle of evangelical belief. A hypothesis it may be; but it is certainly an innocent one.

If decided exception is taken to any of our author's views, it will probably be to those on imputation, a subject poorly understood, even by some well-read theologians. It is important however, to remember that Vinet does not contrast the imputation of *faith* for righteousness, with the imputation of *Christ's righteousness* to the believer. In his view, they are one and the same thing. *Faith* makes the righteousness of Christ its own, incorporates it, so to speak, with its own nature; and it is for this reason, doubtless, that it is imputed for righteousness. But the righteousness of Christ without us, and irrespective of faith, cannot justify the ungodly. We must receive Christ, and make his righteousness one with our

spiritual nature, before it will avail for our justification. "Justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus, the righteousness of Christ, in order to be *upon* all, must first be *unto* all. It must be received by the whole heart, as its portion and its joy. "As many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believed* on his name." It is clear, then, that to be justified by faith is the same thing as to be justified by Christ, and that faith is imputed for righteousness, because it appropriates the merits of Christ to itself, in other words, makes us one with Christ one in sympathy, feeling, and aim. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are *in* Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." But we will permit the author to speak for himself, in the following note, appended to the second volume of his discourses.

"A friend has reproached me, on account of the function I have ascribed to faith, a function which, in his estimation, belongs only to Jesus Christ. 'Faith,' says he, 'whatever it may be, can never, as a work, be imputed for righteousness, that is to say, become the cause, or rather the source, of our justification before God."

My honourable friend well knows, that faith is imputed to us, as it was to Abraham, for righteousness; only he does not wish to have it on the ground of merit. Merit is certainly beyond us. He is therefore perfectly right, and if the idea of *work* involves that of *merit*, the name of work cannot with propriety be applied to *faith*. Yet we ought not, for fear of one error, to plunge into another. These words, *being imputed for righteousness*, are naturally understood in the sense of, *holding the place of righteousness*, and righteousness, in this passage, signifies the observance of rites, which Abraham did not observe, and which Christians observe no more than he; but these rites are the type of works. St. Paul then teaches, with reference to men in general, that their faith will take the place of works which they have not done, and it is on this ground that he speaks, in many places, of the righteousness of faith, or of the righteousness which is by faith; it is always faith taking the place of works, faith reckoned as righteousness, faith becoming the condition of a new covenant, as obedience was that of

the old.[1] Now this condition is a legal, or a natural one. If it is *legal*, we fall back upon the notion of work, and perhaps of merit. But if it is *natural*, we ought to understand, that it ties the knot of the covenant; for it is in the nature of such a faith to unite us to God, and such union is the basis of sanctification and of salvation; but here *work* re-appears, work, I say, and not *merit*. If faith is a condition in any sense, what is it? In considering what is said upon this subject, I continue to believe that faith, that is to say, something which is *in* us, and *of* us, is in the sense of *fact*, the condition of salvation, which, in the sense of *right*, is unconditional. The matter at issue is that of accepting, on the basis of grace, a salvation which cannot be obtained on the ground of work. That pure and simple acceptance is imputed to us for righteousness, or if the phrase is preferred, takes the place of righteousness; on this we are agreed. If, then, I say, in addition, that faith is a work, either in that which prepares and produces it, or in itself, or finally in its development, I affirm a thing which is true, and which can be proved, but which introduces no embarrassment into the exposition of Christian doctrine. If there is any difficulty in separating the objective or divine element, in faith, from the subjective, or human element, and giving to each their respective parts, that difficulty exists no more in my system than in that of my opponents. What, according to my theory, is found added to that difficulty? It is the difficulty which is common to both, and which ought to have occupied their attention first of all. I will return to it presently; but let us first see, whether as it is affirmed, it is one and the same thing to exhibit faith as the natural condition of salvation, and to make it the cause or source of justification before God. In my judgment it is not one and the same thing; the cause or source of salvation remains with God. A benefit is lost to me, if I do not accept it; but this is not equivalent to saying that in accepting it, I am my own benefactor. My benefactor, in the

[1] If the Gospel sometimes speaks of justification by grace, faith is always implied, and these words, *being justified by faith*, are the most common; this is the consecrated expression. See Gal., v, 5; Phil., iii, 9; Heb., x, 39; Rom., iii, 24; Rom., vi, 11, etc. Thus, it is not grace *absolutely* and *naked-ly* which takes the place of righteousness, but *faith*, which moreover is the gift of grace. See Gal., v, 5. Doubtless, no one will pretend that in these passages *faith* means the *object of faith*.

Gospel, is He who has decreed that my faith should take the place of the works I have not done. Did this substitution or exchange depend upon me? Could I claim it, or imagine it? Is it not evident that all the honour of that *commutation* reverts to God alone? If this conclusion is not evident, it is not my theory that obscures it. If the glory of God is found diminished, it is quite as much by the system of my opponents as by mine. For in either case, man must do his part, man must believe. In both it is necessary that, something having taken place *without* us, something should take place *within* us. From these two things, and not from one of them, results salvation. Let us dwell upon this a moment.

The whole work of salvation, from the beginning to the consummation, belongs to God. Let us set out from this. But salvation, that work of God, has two distinct parts; the one objective,—that is, pardon under the form of redemption;—the paternal arms are open to receive us; we find ourselves, without any co-operation on our part, absolved from our past sins (2 Peter, i, 9); a new career is opened to us, in which we advance continually under the shadow of divine forgiveness, ever active and inexhaustible as the merit of Jesus Christ; the other subjective, that is faith, which, reduced to its most simple notion, is still subjective; it is always *I* that believe, though God has enabled me to do so; this faith which produces joy and love, unites me indissolubly to God, and crowns the work of my salvation, which could not be consummated except in so far as I am united to God; in other words, it is no more *I* that live, but Christ that liveth in me. In my salvation, then, there is something from *me*,—God has taken something of mine in order to save me; he has employed me to accomplish my own salvation. Such a conclusion cannot be refused on any system, if we will only rest satisfied with our Saviour's words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth in him* might not perish but have everlasting life." It is not I, then, who save myself, in any respect, or in any degree; but I cannot be saved without my own action.

St. Paul was full of such thoughts when, writing to some who believed, he besought them to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor., v, 20.) *To beseech* has for its correlative *to yield;* to yield is an act of the will; but this act of the will could only be the immediate

continuance, or prolongation of the act of faith, or of the acceptance of the divine pardon. In faith then, as well as in that which continues it, there is an act of the will, which is no less an act of the will for being a gift of God. And when St. Paul said to believers "Labour for your salvation!" (Phil., ii, 12), he makes an undoubted appeal to their will. "Labour for your salvation!" or, according to the literal sense, *work out*, accomplish, achieve your salvation! Who would have dared to say such a thing, if an apostle had not said it before him? But if one is obliged to admit that in setting out from faith man works, why does it cost him an effort to concede that in faith itself there is work; and why should one of these scandalize him more than the other? He must accept both, but must not, on that account, say that faith is the source or cause of salvation. For this work of man is still a grace; it is *God that works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* (Phil., ii, 12.) There are other passages still more specific. St. Paul (Acts, xiv, 22) exhorts his disciples to persevere in the faith; he had, then, before their conversion, exhorted them to believe, and the matter of an exhortation is a free act.

Besides in the discourse under consideration, I have prescribed nothing; I have not even dogmatized; I have only explained how such an act as faith may be called a work, and even a moral work. It can easily be supposed that, when I see faith producing works, I should not curiously analyze it to discover there the voluntary and active element of which I have spoken; I should remain satisfied that he who lives according to the will of God, has believed, and believed well. If any one esteems my explanations and distinctions superfluous, so be it. I could never *violate* principles, since I could say, that we are saved by *means* of, or through the medium of faith (Eph., ii, 8); that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb., xi, 6); that true faith rests on the power of God (1 Cor., ii, 5); and that no one can say but by the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ is Lord. (1 Cor., xii, 3.) And here I revert to what I have said respecting the thief on the cross. My exegesis of that narrative in sacred history has been complained of. But what have I said of it? That he was saved by means of faith. And now let us reason the matter. Can any one, without holiness, see the Lord? No. Was he then actually holy? No. But,

through faith in the Saviour, he had the germ of holiness; the divine eye saw the tree in the germ. Thus, what I say, you say also on this. Is this, then, saying that faith was the source or cause of his salvation? Certainly not, but the *condition*, or what we express by this word, a secondary source springing from the first, a canal for irrigation, flowing from the river. And if I now add that the cry of the thief was the confession of an humbled soul; if I say that, all thief as he was, he received the word apparently with a good and honest heart (Luke, viii, 4), or that God opened his heart (Acts, xvi, 14) to believe in Jesus Christ, it seems to me that I do not make him the author of his own salvation; and on the other hand, I can, as it appears to me, understand a little better, how Jesus could say to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

I hope this note may explain, and also, if necessary, rectify whatever in the discourse under consideration may have given some offence or excited some uneasiness. It is all I could say at the close of this volume. If I had been aware of it sooner, I would certainly have reviewed the discourse in question, and it is probable should not have left it absolutely such as it is now. I invite criticism, and in advance, thank those who, discussing fundamentally the opinions I have expressed, shall separate the tares from the wheat, and reduce my idea to terms more precise and clear. No one, I venture to say, will be more obliged than myself.

In conclusion, the following is the definition of faith given by one of the most judicious theologians of the English church. It does not differ, it appears to me, in idea, from the one I have given.

"Faith, in its most general acceptation, is belief in the truth, or the assent which our heart gives to the testimony of God, the testimony which his word expresses, and of which we make application to ourselves. To believe in Christ is to receive from the heart the testimony which God has given of his Son; it is humbly, sincerely, and frequently to flee for deliverance to that Divine Redeemer; it is cordially and frankly to accept his person and the salvation he has accomplished in his triple office of prophet, priest, and king."—*Foundation and Nature of Faith in Jesus Christ, by Thomas Scott.*

Mestrezat has said, "Justifying faith is nothing else than a serious and intense consideration of Jesus Christ; and a man, who will be cited in his turn (M. Burnier, Instructions Pastorales), has recently defined faith, 'the look of the heart towards Christ crucified.'"[1]

[1] This definition of faith reminds us of the definition of gratitude given by one of the dumb pupils of the Abbé Sicard. Being asked what she understood by this word, she immediately wrote down, "*Gratitude* is the memory of the heart." If gratitude to God and his Christ be the memory of the heart, surely faith may be termed, the *look* or the *vision* of the heart.—T.

XXI.

CHRISTIAN JOY.

"Rejoice evermore."—1 Thessalonians, v, 16.

CAN joy be the object of a precept, or a formal injunction? We are disposed at first to deny it. Joy is not an action, it is not even a moral sentiment; I mean one of the dispositions of the soul, for which it is more or less responsible. It is simply a state most desirable, provided it is not evolved at the expence of conscience and duty. We are just, sincere, benevolent, on condition of willing to be so; we are joyful only when we have occasion for it. Being in reality nothing but an internal feeling, the vivid conception of our happy condition, it appears no more natural to exhort us to be joyful than it is to exhort us to be prosperous.

Nevertheless, it is not the Gospel only, nor the Gospel first, that has enjoined us to be joyful. Philosophers have not failed to do so; and it is worthy of remark, that in this they have only been the echoes of that popular wisdom, which, in all times, has suggested to philosophy its most important maxims.—"Keep joyful!" such among our ancestors was the expression most frequently associated with the words of adieu. The sages of the world have only attached their seal, and given a more precise form to that vague injunction. But we must do them justice; for in their point of view, and in proportion to the light they have, they are right. Organs of human consciousness, they possess, we acknowledge it, the commencement of all truths, which God alone could carry out and complete, by directing and prolonging them to himself.

The sages of this world are right. Sorrow is the death of the soul, joy is its life. Sorrow drives us back, and shuts us up within ourselves; joy, so to speak, opens us, dilates and expands us; it is to the soul what a gentle heat is to the body. Every one has felt this. Sorrow, that is the sorrow of the world, is the most opposed

to the employment of our faculties, and consequently to action. We are never induced to act but by means of some attraction or hope. But sadness discolours every thing, strips objects of their charms, and darkens the prospects of the future. It deprives the soul of all its aspirations; enchains all our powers and produces an internal paralysis. It thus renders us equally useless to ourselves and others; in which two respects it has incurred and deserved the anathemas of philosophers.

Joy, the condition of development, of energy, and action, joy, the essential principle of life, has appeared to them so much more worthy of being recommended. And indeed it ought to be enjoined, if it is really susceptible of it. But who can seriously, and for itself, enjoin joy? Who can, with one hand point to obligation in this case, without indicating with the other its means and its motives? Who especially can prescribe to us a durable and lasting joy? Who can oblige us to make it the foundation and texture of our internal life, when, in fact, sorrow is the foundation and texture of our external life, or when in that internal life itself, sorrow, forestalling joy, has taken entire possession of our soul, in one case by temperament, in another by reflection?

O then, do ye command me to be joyful, change my temperament, which impels me invariably to sorrow, or destroy by facts, decisive facts, the result to which other facts have irresistibly dragged my thoughts. But if ye cannot provide me a new temperament, nor extinguish the reflections which have given the prevailing colour to my whole life, what have ye to offer me, except that which I can easily find without you; which has been commended to me already, and which every man opposes, with more or less success, to the waves of sorrow, which return unceasingly, from the midst of our life, as from a profound ocean, drenching and overwhelming the soul—namely, diversion, self-oblivion, and delirium?

For every soul, doubtless, carries within itself a treasure of sorrow. It is even a condition of our nature, that in all our joys, even the most intense, I know not what sorrow ever mingles, as in a song of gladness, a hollow murmur, or a stifled groan. It might be said that the very voice of joy awakens in the depths of the soul a slumbering grief; that the feeling of our misery waits

that precise moment to seize and hold us, and that the fires which illumine our night serve as a signal to the phantom which haunts us. We may go further, without anticipating the ideas to which the remaining part of this discourse is to call our attention, and say that the purest, the deepest, the holiest joy, so long as life and mortality retain us in their bands, is not exempt from some returns of melancholy. After all, these returns are far from disturbing and impoverishing the soul. On the contrary, they nourish it; they enhance its joy; they put new songs into its mouth. Nevertheless, that joy is the honey of Samson; it has been found in the lion's mouth; the *sweet* has sprung from the *bitter;* and if the bitter is no longer felt, it does not fail to recall itself to our memory.

Consequently, there is no joy without some anxiety and alloy. But if you are anxious to oppose to us, not a fact which contradicts what we say, for that you will not find, but one which, amplified, may appear to give joy a higher place in the world and in life, than we have accorded it; if, in a word, you would seek an example of the fullest and most exquisite joy the world can taste, we will readily aid you in your search, and spare you much useless labour. Accompany us to those men in whom the most excellent part of humanity is, so to speak, abolished; those whom no lofty thought ever visits; those to whom the language of the soul is completely foreign and unintelligible; those perpetually occupied with amusements; hearts inexpressibly light, too light to descend into the depths of their misery, too vain to be unhappy, and in whom moral grief finds no place to rest or linger for a moment. Behold the elect of joy! These are they whom sorrow scarcely knows, whom it visits only at long intervals, whom it seems even to forget until the moment when it falls suddenly, with all its weight upon their frail spirits, alas! finding it easier to crush them than to move them!

Sorrow, on the other hand, is the lot of profound souls and strong intellects. The more we feel, the more we suffer. The furrows traced by powerful thought become chasms under its influence. It might indeed seem strange that in proportion to the moral worth of the soul, it should have less of happiness, and that joy should prefer to dwell in the most frivolous minds. Whatever there is in us of reason and justice protests against so great a dis-

order. But that disorder exists; joy is not the fruit of reason. What then is that reason, that philosophy, which counsels and commands us to be joyful? It is a philosophy which declines to know the world, to fathom human life; or if it has discovered the truth, interdicts it as dangerous and fatal. It is a philosophy which involves, if not the most formal, at least the most decisive confession of the misery of our condition; for what is our nature, if we dare not look it in the face; and what is life, if we must conceal from ourselves its true character and real value?

You have not then, O men, any other possible choice. Think and weep, or rejoice on condition of not thinking at all. I mean, of not thinking upon what concerns you the most nearly. For I am aware that, in other respects, thought applied to other objects is a diversion to the mind, and in proportion as it is more profound and grave in appearance, it renders us more frivolous in reality. Among the means of dissipating our minds, of separating us from ourselves, none is more effectual than intense and earnest study. This apparent seriousness expels true seriousness more certainly and more rapidly than even the amusements of the world.

It is necessary, my brethren, to inform you what stifles and kills the germ of joy in the heart of the man who thinks? Teach you! I flatter myself that I have only to remind you of it, or perhaps only to give a voice to the latent sentiments with which your souls are filled. Your life is passed amid temptations to joy incessantly repressed. Joy has moments, sorrow the whole of life. That is a moment of joy when a cherished hope is realized; that is a life of sorrow when we feel that the successive realization of all our hopes has not filled the infinite abyss of the soul. That is a moment of joy when self-love is intoxicated with triumph; that is a life of sorrow which developes before our eyes, and renders more and more evident to our minds the utter vanity of the most glorious success. That is a moment of joy when we rejoin a beloved object from whom we have been separated; but, without saying any thing here of the frightful moment of separation, that is a life of sorrow which is spent in remembering or anticipating misfortunes. That is a moment of joy which gives us the smile of a beautiful day, the sun so pleasant to behold, the free development of any of our powers, the feeling of existence in the plenitude of health.

That is a life of sorrow which hurries promiscuously to the abyss before us our good and our evil hours, our pains and our pleasures, nay more, our soul itself; for the thoughts and affections of which it is composed precede us to the tomb, while of all that we possess and all we have been we can retain nothing, no, not even our most cherished griefs.

That, moreover, is a moment of joy which raises us, by some aspiration of love or virtue, above the dust our cradle, and the flesh our prison, and enables us to approach the serene atmosphere of heaven. But, alas! that is a life of sorrow which, upon the whole, belongs to the dust and the flesh, and which, as its final result, only unites us more closely, and, so to speak, identifies us more thoroughly with flesh and dust. That is a moment of joy, a gleam of sunlight, when the soul comes into contact with God, and holds momentary fellowship with the Father of spirits. But that is a life of profound and bitter grief, when, like ours, it is spent without God and without hope; or, to make the statement more complete, a life with God, but with God offended; a life with expectation, but an expectation of wrath.

Let there be moments of joy, then, meteors in the night, transient vistas, opening into the land of peace and light, rays of sunshine through the bars of our prison. But a consistent and durable joy, a joy natural and appropriate to our condition, forming a part of ourselves, and mingling with the whole tissue of our life, a joy over which sorrow passes, as on a beautiful day some transparent and fleecy clouds pass over the azure of the sky;—such a joy, such a life, the Gospel alone can bestow. And since it alone contains the conditions of its bestowment, it alone has a right to recommend and prescribe it.

We will not detain you by discussing the motives and foundations of the joy which the Gospel has created for the Christian, as our present object leads us in a different direction. We will not say that this joy, so dearly purchased by our Saviour, includes in it all joys and absorbs all griefs. We will not say that, in addition to all the advantages which belong to all other joys, and which we have noticed in the beginning of this discourse, it has all those qualities which are wanting to human joys, and not only so, but is free from all that tarnishes them, being at once holy, calm, and serious, delightful both to those that see it and those that feel

it;—subjects well worthy our attention and study. But other reflections invite us. We have not at present to show you that the assurance of our reconciliation to God, and the consciousness of the re-establishment of unity and harmony within us, penetrate our hearts with joy, and in addition to the joy which opens the heart to love, a joy still more holy, which love alone can produce; but we have to show you that the joy which the Gospel inspires in Christians, it ought also to enjoin upon them.

We see the world, with reference to the practical teachings of the Gospel, divided between two opposite errors. The first wish that the Gospel had said every thing; the others are astonished that it has not said less. The former, not knowing what power of application and impulsion God has hidden in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, believe an exact and minute enumeration of all the applications of the elementary principles to be necessary. They desire that the whole Christian doctrine should be spelt to them letter by letter. Others struck with the clearness and fruitfulness of the elementary doctrines of Christianity, think that they have only to be eagerly embraced, and all that remains will follow of its own accord. And they would be right, were it not necessary, even in the Christian, to take into account, to the very last, the weakness and inconsistency of man. Love God, and do what you will! is a sublime exclamation of gratitude and love. It is the lively proclamation of the true principle of human life; but it is not the motto of man, it is not even that of the Christian. It would be safer to say to him, Love God, and do what *he* wills. And this is what God, who knows all that is in man better than man himself, has said to him. He has told us what this will is; he has told it to the Christian, as well as to the natural man. He is not contented with putting us into the road, and saying to us, Walk! He who is himself "the Way," has advanced, and borne us with him. Directions and aids have been multiplied for our benefit. But while God has attached every duty to its vital source, in order that the duty itself might also be vital, he has always named it, suggested it, defended and recommended it, by the most pressing motives. He has acted thus with reference to duties, the fulfilment of which is, properly speaking, an action; but he has also done so, in the case of others, altogether internal,

and fulfilled only in the soul. Thus it is not here and there only we find his directing hand, but at our very first departure, at our very first step. We see it in his paternal solicitude, prescribing what he gives us, and commanding what he inspires.

Joy is not only a privilege of the Christian, it is his force, for the same general reasons that make all joy a force. It is in this soil that God has planted the new creature. So true is this, that it might, without exaggeration, be said that to be a Christian is to be joyful. But the joy which Jesus Christ has kindled in the Christian, the wind of grief is always threatening to destroy. The element that feeds it requires to be constantly renewed. It will not be safe to leave it to the first supply of the "oil of gladness," with which the lamp was filled. What it has consumed must be replaced day by day, and night by night. In other words, in order to live, we must continually cherish the same sentiments which first inspired us with life; we must take, in their profoundest and most solemn import, and as a most pressing injunction, these words of the apostle, *Rejoice evermore!*

I have said that the wind of sorrow, and consequently of death, continually threatens the flame of joy; I should have said, the wind of *our* sorrows, for the sorrow which blows upon the joy of the Christian is not of one kind only.

There is a sorrow of nature. Nature is not destroyed in the Christian; it subsists in him entire; and while the elevation of his principles, and especially of his new affections, generally places him above the reach of injury, he has remaining in him a sufficient number of sensitive and vulnerable points. His strength consists not in being ignorant of trials, but in overcoming them. He suffers as much as others, more, perhaps, than others; and probably it would not be difficult to prove that what multiplies his joys, multiplies also his sorrows. Christianity, so far from destroying, exercises and developes natural sensibility. But whatever may be its degree, a certain sensibility always exists in man. The Christian, like every other man, needs esteem and affection, and suffers when he sees himself deprived of them. Like every other man, he has his tastes and habits, which he cannot renounce and not feel a painful void, and a profound ennui. He has natural and sacred affections, the objects of which death tears from him before the

time,—alas! always before the time. He has opinions, convictions, and hopes, the triumph of which is dear to him, and which he cannot without bitter regret, see perilled or subdued. Furthermore, he has a body, the pains of which easily become the pains of the soul; health, alterations in which easily change in his eyes the whole aspect of life. One of these causes is often sufficient to plunge him in distress; what, then, must be the effect of the whole united, when, as experience has taught you, deep calleth unto deep? I can easily believe that his faith would even then remain entire. But how? For what is faith without joy? What is a ship without sails? Let us not be afraid to utter the whole truth. From each of these separate trials, and from the whole combined, the Christian must either issue more joyful than ever, or his joy will perish there. The trials of the present must impel his reluctant spirit towards the glory of the future. By looking upon sufferings in the light of blessings, he must indemnify himself for all the sacrifices he makes. The gloom of his grief, like that of night, must cause the stars of his sky to shine with deeper radiance; by divesting himself of earthly riches, he must draw liberally from the treasures of his heavenly Father; his submission must rise to complete acquiescence, and his accents of resignation lose themselves in a hymn of praise?

Such is the law of the Gospel and the law of our nature. It is when we are weak that we are strong; it is when the outward man decays that the inward man is renewed, strengthened, glorified. Where, then, should joy abound if not where grief has overflowed? But during the contest, during that solemn crisis, the Christian should call joy to the aid of his sinking nature. He ought, in advance, if I may so speak, to exercise himself with joy, make it the habit and temperament of his mind, nourish it with every thing which at first gave it birth, every day have it formed fresh and entire in his heart; that in the hour of peril he may not be feeble, nor recoil before advancing sorrow, and that such sorrow may not remain sole possessor of his heart, in the presence of I know not what faith, a faith as sorrowful as grief itself, which sighs and blesses not, generating neither action nor love.

"Rejoice evermore," says the apostle; let your joy be constant and durable; let it leave no opening through which sorrow can

penetrate; for sorrow is the world under a form which disguises it the most; it is death with the appearance of life. Joy is your first, your every-day duty; it binds you to all other duties; it guards all your treasures. Ever be prepared to oppose it to the sorrow of the world, nay more, to an excess of godly sorrows. For here the danger is greater, because it is least suspected. But why suspect, why shun godly sorrows, which, it is said, produce repentance unto salvation which needeth not to be repented of? Shun them! No, doubtless, for that would be to shun the messengers of God. What we ought to suspect and shun is man, who stealthily introduces himself into every good work of God, in order to corrupt it. Let us, then, seek to detect that hidden man who would soon corrupt the most sacred sorrows. Let us show what advantage is given by such griefs to that *man of sin*, and thus endeavour to prove, that the best griefs require to be tempered and chastened by the best of joys.

Nothing is more agreeable to the will of God than the sorrow of the Christian after he has sinned. In one sense, it might be said, that it could never be excessive. Sin, which requires from God an excess of mercy, requires from man an excess of sorrow; and as the first of these excesses has produced no disorder in God, the second gives no occasion for disorder in man. But feeble as we are, we could not sustain all the grief which would be proper in itself considered; we could not go, without perishing, to the end of our sorrow; the soul would exhaust itself, before it had exhausted all its evil. It would be necessary, before that hour came, if indeed it should ever come, that joy, such a joy as that of the Gospel, should interpose to aid us; a joy,—O wonderful and adorable wisdom of my God!—as holy as our sorrow, a joy which sanctifies us as much as our grief would have done, and even more so; a joy capable of producing in us, as well as grief itself, that repentance unto salvation that needeth not to be repented of.

Alas! I well know that sorrow for sin will never cost us our life; it is other griefs, not this, which kill; but is it not enough that it casts us down, that it disheartens us, and by disgusting us with ourselves, takes away all our energy? The apostles, during those mournful hours when their Master and ours shed, in drops of sweat, the same blood which was to flow more freely upon Cal-

vary, "fell asleep for sorrow;" and Jesus, still suffering that bitter agony, addressed to them this tender and sorrowful reproof, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" It was because they were sorrowful; it was because no joy, not even that of love, sustained their weary bodies and languishing spirits. What was their sorrow? That of penitence? Did they vainly reproach themselves for their little love and zeal? Did they compare their selfishness and arid melancholy with the love and self-sacrifice of their Master? Were they sorrowful on account of his death, which they could not prevent, and their dead hopes, about to descend with him to the sepulchre? I know not, nor is it necessary for me to know. I only see that their sorrow caused them to sleep; and I know that sorrow causes the soul as well as the body to slumber. I know, too, that sorrow for sin may produce the same effects, and that, born of sin, it may, in its turn, generate sin. This view alarms me. I seek the remedy; and, guided by the apostle, I do not seek long. I do not say, put limits to your grief; for where are such limits? I do not say, put *just* limits to your grief; for in reality, what is just here is to put no limits at all. I say with the apostle, "Overcome evil with good," sorrow with joy. Joy is the true remedy for sorrow. It never had, never could have any other. We must always give the soul that weeps reason to rejoice; all other consolation is utterly useless.

Let us not leave the subject without having unmasked a subtle device of the human heart. It readily defends, or at least excuses its sorrow, as a sign and pledge of humility. But it is not always such. We must go to the foundation of our sorrow, and ascertain its cause. We must enquire, if it has for its principle, regret for having offended God, dishonoured his image, grieved his Spirit, or merely shame at having fallen from the height to which it supposed itself raised, and thus having lost its own good opinion. Our standard and rule is, by no means, some idea of perfection which we may form for ourselves, and which is nothing more than our pride. Our only standard and rule is God. The object of all our duties, the judge of all our actions, is God; and hence to prostrate ourselves before another, even were it in dust and ashes, is to prostrate ourselves before an idol.

O what a subtle sophist is pride! It is willing to see us great

on any condition, and if possible, even at the expence of God. And since we know full well that we cannot be great by sin, we seek to attain this end by sorrow for sin. A greatness truly our own is on earth sufficiently difficult to find; neither fortune, honours, nor talents, can supply a drapery ample enough to cover all our degradation. Rigidly scrutinized, nothing but our sorrows, our misery, can be claimed as truly ours. Well, the , we magnify ourselves on account of our very wretchedness and sorrow; we try to convince ourselves that on this side at least we possess some merit. If in this instance there is not all the effect of an express deliberation, since a sorrow commanded ceases to be a sorrow, it is yet the means of cherishing our sorrow, and supplies a motive for not contending against it. If grief sometimes sleeps, it is also sometimes intoxicated; it inspires us with a secret feeling of our importance, absorbs us in the contemplation of ourselves, and refuses that joy whose consolations humble us. For it is here, O Christian joy, we discover thine adorable character, and the seal of thy divinity! Thou consolest, but in humbling us. Under thine influence we are enabled to share our regards between ourselves and thine adorable source; we are satisfied with another greatness than our own; and the more we discover the immense benefit conferred on us, in our salvation, the more do we appear little in our own eyes. The goodness which interposes in our behalf overwhelms us; we rejoice to see so great a God so good; in the presence of such a God, we are happy to feel ourselves little. We are not ashamed to be humbled before love; we rejoice to feel our selfishness reduced; we rejoice to be less occupied with ourselves, and more with God; in a word, we bless him for having enabled us to forget ourselves in order to think of him!

There are other sorrows, the occasion of which is purer, though their source may not be more so; sorrows truly Christian, but the excess of which we ought to distrust. The excess, did I say? No, that is not saying enough; it is these sorrows themselves, or at least, what may often mingle with them, we ought to distrust. I will explain myself. You are Christians; you must, then, by virtue of the grace that made you such, bear some affinity to Him who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity. This iniquity, spread in the world, overflows before your eyes, and casts its im-

pure scum even to your feet. You see this and you weep. The enmity of the world against the Gospel is exasperated. It becomes furious; it passes from words to actions; the most dismal scenes declare it around you. You see these things, and you weep more bitterly. Is that all? No; Christians make themselves the enemies of Christianity; their conduct dishonours it; their dissensions render it a theatre of scandal, and an object of derision; the folly of the cross, which is all-powerful, gives place to their own folly, which is weakness itself. You see these things, and you have not tears enough to shed; for the evil comes from the very place where the remedy ought to be found, the sorrow springs from the sources of consolation.

Alas for him whose heart is not touched by these things! But beware of that sorrow. Scarcely is the source of it revealed by your tears than I see it poisoned by the enemy. Whence does your weeping proceed? From grief or anger? Ah, it is necessary to know. For what do you weep? For injuries done to truth, or for the defeat of a party? With what eye do you look upon those that afflict you? With that of commiseration, or of hatred? Do you not perceive, unhappy Christians, that your eyes are sullied by fixing them upon sullied images, that these have transferred to you a portion of the evil under which you groan? A different evil I grant, but not less; for tell me if any thing is more fatal than pride; if any thing is worse than hatred?

But some will say, if such be the effects of sorrow, why is it imposed, and even enjoined upon us? Why? To conduct us to joy, to which it is the only road. "Blessed are they that mourn," says Jesus Christ, "for they shall be comforted." Whence we see, that we do not reach happiness but through tears; and that true felicity does not consist in the absence of tears, but in the presence of consolation; while real misery is not so much to weep as to weep without being consoled. But how, after this, can we doubt the superior worth of consolation, or hesitate to say, that it is a joy, nay the most perfect of joys? Why after this, doubt that it is the true name of our highest good, and includes every thing worthy of the name of good? Why doubt that it ought to be the characteristic and aim of our whole existence, and that if Christianity accords moments to sorrow, it devotes our whole life to joy?

All this is deduced from the declaration of our Saviour; but how much is its evidence enhanced, when we consider the nature itself of that joy which our Saviour has brought us! That joy is the joy of pardon. It is the joy of seeing and feeling ourselves united for eternity to the supreme Source of our being and happiness. It is that of feeling ourselves emancipated at once from the bonds of mortality, and the chains of sin, partaking in the holiness of heaven, loving God, and in him loving the whole universe. It is that of calling by the endearing name of Father, and approaching as an intimate friend, Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and who, in his word and in his providence, has himself declared, that he is a consuming fire, and that no man can stand before him. It is that of knowing that nothing can ever pluck us out of his hand; and that, whatever may happen, let the earth dissolve, the heavens pass away with a noise, and the whole creation send a cry of horror and death through infinite space, his goodness towards us remains eternally the same!

It remains eternally. Why then should not our joy remain; why should we not rejoice *evermore;* and why, for a goodness which never tires, never diminishes, have we known only moments of gratitude, separated by long intervals of ingratitude? Do not be surprised that I here change the terms, without previous intimation; the terms alone are changed. But can gratitude in reality be conceived of without joy; and is sorrow, at bottom, any thing but ingratitude? God forbid, that, making a grace of the Gospel a result of temperament, I should impose upon Christian joy a particular physiognomy, and represent it as known only by specific features, made to radiate around it as a sun. Let us permit circumstances to mitigate the intensity of that joy, but not extinguish it. Faith may truly exist without gladness and transport; but faith without joy is no longer faith. Divested of that characteristic, what remains to it? Its substance is gone. Imagine if you can a believer with deadened heart, desponding soul, and inanimate life, dragging himself, by means of faith, to the throne of the Lamb, and while falling at his feet, uttering these languishing words, "Lamb of God, my sacrifice, and my God! thy love has vanquished the enemies of my soul; thy tears and thy blood have been shed on my behalf, and delivered me from the power of dark-

ness ; thou hast opened for me the way to God ; thou hast brought me into harmony with thy Father, with entire nature, and with myself; thou hast secured for me in heaven an eternity of happiness; thou hast given me on earth, by thy Holy Spirit, the pledges of my salvation. Lord, I believe in thee; I adore thee, O my Master! I love thee, O my Saviour! But I cannot rejoice in what thou hast done for me, and in what thou art to me ; at least my joy cannot counterbalance my sorrows ; my joy is lost in the abyss of my grief; it does not spring up and overflow ; it never abides within me ; and it seems that I am embraced in thine arms, not to awaken, upon thy heart, my deadened heart, but to rest there in a profounder sleep."

The contradiction here is so striking, that such language and such conduct must appear impossible. But if impossible, to what should this discourse tend, what purpose should it serve, and what use should be made of those invitations to joy spread through the Gospel? Why, to convince us that we may truly believe, and with an earnest faith, without having all the joy of our faith; that if we do not watch our treasure, we shall see it gradually stolen from us, by the sorrows of the world, and even by Christian griefs; that the influence of the natural man, of his selfishness and pride, drags us incessantly into the gloom of sorrow; that in order to have our "hearts on high," according to the sacramental word of the ancient church, we must first have "our eyes on high;" that Christian faith, which commences its existence by conviction of guilt and misery, as in a sorrowful cradle, need not remain there longer than is necessary, to take its flight to Him who is its author and finisher. It is not necessary, even with a view to pious humiliation, for a man to remain too constantly alone, and too much subjected to himself. It is not in contemplating himself, but in contemplating his Saviour, that he will be transformed into his image. Security, power, salvation, are found in looking to the Sun of righteousness, who has risen with healing in his beams. Eyes on high! then disciples of Christ! In advance, set over against, and ever oppose to all the sorrows of the soul, and the pangs of conscience, the ineffable beauty of eternal blessings. Let your eyes dwell upon them that they may see nothing else; that they may behold nothing between them and that divine image.

Constantly occupy your thoughts, and fill your conversation with the God of the new covenant; accustom yourselves to consider Him, in all those aspects which convey to the soul joy with humiliation, humiliation with joy. Let it be a daily exercise of your faith, assiduously to contemplate his mercy, which sought you in the depths of your misery, which still embraces and protects you; his faithfulness, which assures you of the firmness of his promises, and the perpetuity of his love; his infinite power, ever at the service of his infinite compassion; his eternity, which opens a boundless career to all the designs of his grace, all the engagements of his faithfulness, all the developments of his power. Say to yourselves that this God, all gracious, all faithful, and all powerful, is your Father; that he loves you more than a father; and that your earthly parents would, or could abandon you a thousand times before your Father in heaven would abandon you; in a word, live in habitual communion with the thought of that God at whose right hand there is fulness of joy for evermore; and you will find that there is a fulness of joy also in the thought; that the contemplation of Him is delightful as his presence; that to dwell upon his image is to possess Him; and that even in heaven no one will possess him more but he who contemplates him more. Do this, my brethren; take the word of the apostle literally; make the holy joy of the Christian a positive and constant duty; and your faith, gratitude, and obedience will be guarded by your happiness.

O how delightful it is to possess a joy of which it is so delightful even to speak! But how painful it is to feel oneself so far below his own words, or his own conceptions! Who will put into our hearts what we have in our minds and on our lips? Who will give us the joy whose sweetness and beauty we extol? Who will render us as sensible, nay more sensible, to the visitations of that joy, than we are, alas! to the visitations of sorrow? Who will deaden in our heart a diseased sensibility, and perfect in us that divine sense by which we receive the impression of divine things? O God of joy and blessedness! Thou alone canst do it; thou alone canst subdue our fatal sorrows, and every thing which renders our sorrows fatal. Come, then, and divest us of that sorrow which is only an attachment to the world. Cause our souls to rejoice in thee. Render thyself visible, in all the radiance of thy

goodness, in every part of the universe, and at every moment of our life. Do thou, Goodness supreme! place thyself between our vision and all other objects, so that our eyes may be forced to meet thee every where; that every thing may speak to us of thy love and our hopes; that every thing may be transformed into promise and blessing; and that our voice, mingling in the universal concert, in its turn, may bless thee, O God, our Saviour, and spread around us the joy and gratitude thou hast planted in our hearts!

XXII.

PEACE IN HEAVEN AND GLORY IN THE HIGHEST.[1]

"And when he drew nigh, even to the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."—LUKE, xix, 37, 38.

SUCH are the acclamations with which the ravished multitude make the air resound, at the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. Such is the triumph they decree to that peaceful King, who has revealed his power only in blessings. Obscure and poor multitude, incapable of displaying a sumptuous preparation in honour of him they love, they confine themselves to scattering branches under the feet of the humble beast on which he rides. Some strip off their garments and spread them on the way before the Son of David, and all, in a transport of joy and adoration, cry out, as he advances, "Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!"

If Jesus has willed that the action of that woman who poured the perfume upon his feet should be recounted throughout the universe, is it surprising that the New Testament should have preserved for us the memory of a more splendid work, the homage rendered to Jesus by a multitude? This fact, perpetuated in the recollections of men, has also taken a place in our Christian institutions; we celebrate it eight days before the passover, on a day that we call Palm Sunday; we assist, in thought, at the triumphal entry of Christ into the city of David; in imagination, we scatter palms in the way of Christ, and say, with his disciples, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!

But before repeating these words, and appropriating them, so to speak, to our own use, is it not necessary to understand them?

[1] Preached on Palm Sunday.

Ought we not to be sure, when the mouth speaks them, the heart also utters them? These certainly are not words of a confused import, or vague expressions which we can pronounce without interest and responsibility. They are words which, in the mind of the disciples, had a particular sense and a precise design. It is this sense and this design which it is important, at the outset, to ascertain.

We can suppose that the multitude, in the midst of which Jesus Christ advanced to Jerusalem, was composed of very different persons. Some who had witnessed his miracles, or had been cured by him of some malady, pressed with emotion around their benefactor, whose nature and mission they had perhaps not fathomed. Others, impatient of the yoke which galled the Jewish nation, rejoiced to see the appearance of that King, so long promised by the prophets; that deliverer, by whom the vanquished nation might return to its former independence. But others, my brethren, others recognized, in his maturity, Him whom Simeon had recognized in his childhood; they saw in Jesus something else than a terrestrial benefactor, something else than a monarch of this world. What, then, did they see in him? Their words teach us. They say, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!

Poor blind man, whose eyes Jesus opened, on account of thy faith! poor leper, to whom Jesus said, while healing thee, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace;" if ye were among that multitude, come, and tell us the meaning of these sublime words with which ye salute the entry of Jesus into the royal city. Blessed, ye say, blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord! But others, perhaps, can say this without attaching to it the same idea with you. They expect a powerful prince, who, in the name of the Lord, like Cyrus of former times, may rebuild the ramparts of Zion, and re-establish it in its primitive glory. Is *this* He whom you expect? For a sufficient answer, you show me that gentle prince, his humble equipage, his simple garments, his poor and pacific retinue. I understand, then, that it is another royalty of which you speak, another kingdom, which is not of this world, and that the King, who has come in the name of the Lord, is not a competitor of Herod, nor a rival of the Romans.

Go on, then, subject of this gentle king, and make me understand your whole idea. It is, responds to me this friend of Jesus, it is altogether in what I have said, and my last words explain the first. "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" Should I speak of peace, if it were a king of this world, preparing himself to recover from its usurpers the kingdom of his ancestors? In such a case, it would be war and not peace I should announce. And even were it possible, in such circumstances, that a king should come to bring us peace, we should speak of it only as on earth; but I have said, "peace in heaven!" Do you believe, then, that we refer to an earthly king?

Ah! the peace which my heart celebrates is a peace concluded and sealed in heaven; a peace between man and God. You and I, and all men have transgressed his holy law, and effaced his image within us. We have banished ourselves from his heart; we have renounced our title as his children; he has ceased to be our father. An impious war has been declared on earth, against the Sovereign of heaven; a revolt of the heart and of the intellect, of the senses and of all the faculties, a general insurrection of the human race against its Creator has been organized in the world. The degraded senses have said, Let us break his bands, and cast away his cords; infatuated and fickle reason in its turn, has said, —"Where is the promise of his coming;" selfishness and pride, leagued together, have exclaimed,—"We will not have this man to reign over us." From the recesses of my hardened heart, a thousand voices cried out the same thing; yet one voice, solemn and earnest, continued to upbraid me for my wanderings, reminded me of the rights of God, of his justice, and of my future destiny, and caused me clearly to understand that there is no peace for the wicked. Such was my condition, full of uncertainty, of trouble, and often of anguish. But behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. Behold the pledge, the means, the author of reconciliation. Behold the Mediator who is willing to interpose between the Father and us, and who can save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him. War ceases between my Creator and me; peace is signed in the palace of "the Highest," and my transported heart cries out, Peace in the heavens!

But may not the peace in which my soul rejoices be a conces-

sion unworthy of the divine Majesty; and in the impious struggle wherein I engaged has not the holiness of God been vanquished? Has he pardoned me from lassitude, from feebleness, or indifference? Ah! far from my spirit be such blasphemies! The King of heaven can sign nothing but an honourable peace. When he deigns to pardon, it cannot possibly be at the expence either of his justice or of his holiness. The honour of his government has suffered no stain. An illustrious atonement, a sacrifice of infinite value, proclaims to the remotest limits of the creation that eternal order could not be violated with impunity. The Son of David enters Jerusalem only to die there, and on the cross which awaits him, he will appear at once the representative of the divine wrath, and of the divine love. Nay more, from that cross to which he is fastened, he will draw all men unto him. That cross will preach to the world; that cross, the instrument of death, will become an instrument of regeneration. The holiness of God re-appears on earth; and at the sight of it, the delighted angels in their celestial dwellings, repeat the same cry we cause to be heard on earth, "Glory to God in the highest."

Thus speaks to me one of those little ones according to the flesh, who on the shores of the lake of Gennesareth, within the walls of Capernaum, or in the streets of Jericho, have heard the Saviour, and believed his word. He thus explains through me those transports of gladness which burst from them, at the sight of Jesus riding to the holy city. If we put ourselves in their place, and surely this will not be difficult, we shall comprehend their transports. We shall feel, also, that no word was equal to their ideas, no expression proportioned to their feelings, and that such joy as theirs never overflowed the hearts of men. History informs us, that the city of Antioch, one of the principal cities of the Roman empire, and the metropolis of the east, having suffered some within its limits to overthrow the statues of the emperor Theodosius, that prince overwhelmed it with the terrible weight of his vengeance. A sentence of proscription enveloped the whole population. The prisons were filled with captives destined for the scaffold. Every day brought new outrages and new terrors; and the resentment of the prince seemed incapable of being appeased but by the destruction of that celebrated city. The bishop Flavian, then devoting

himself for his flock, goes to Constantinople to confront the wrath of the prince, and make an appeal to his mercy. Unexpected happiness! his Christian eloquence softens that irritated soul; the word of pardon, so earnestly sought, issues from the mouth of Theodosius. A messenger is sent immediately to Antioch. He hastens his journey, he arrives; he meets the assembled citizens at the gates; the pardon sparkles in his eyes before it is pronounced by his lips; then it is proclaimed; and that word, that single word, restores to life a thousand despairing souls.

How affecting are such representations! After fifteen centuries they excite our emotion; and causing a part of the joy of the inhabitants of Antioch to thrill our souls, perpetuate among us the impressions of that delightful day. Such joys, however, have a name; but there is none for that joy, the solemn expression of which resounded before the gates of Jerusalem. That man, who in humble apparel rides thither with the multitude, is the bearer also of tidings; but what tidings!—of a pardon,—but what a pardon! He does not say, like the messenger of Flavian,—You shall live a few days more in this land of exile; he says, You shall live eternally! He does not say, You shall yet see the sun,—he says, You shall see God! He does not say, You shall enjoy the good things of this world, before you die,—he says, You shall enjoy a peace that passeth all understanding; you shall be associated, by your sentiments and virtues, with divinity itself; and after a few days devoted to the exercise of your faith, quitting for ever the plains of Babylon, you shall dwell in the land of salvation, in the immortal Canaan.

And who is the messenger that brings such promises as these! He who alone *can* fulfil them,—he who *will* fulfil them,—he by whom all those blessings are acquired,—he who, at the price of his life, has asked from God all the nations as a heritage, and has obtained them,—the great Victim, the great Prophet, the great King!

Now, my brethren, I come to you. Why have you entered this temple? You have come, as did the multitude of the disciples, to celebrate the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. You have come to join your acclamations to theirs, and, like them, to spread palms on the pathway of your Saviour. This day, which was a

festival to them, is also one to you, with this single point of difference, that you have more to celebrate than they, that is, eighteen centuries of the triumphs of Jesus Christ.

It is a festival; yes, a festival. But every true festival is in the heart. Interrogate yours. Does it contain any thing of that which animated with so sweet a transport the believing Israelites? Does it cry out as theirs, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven and glory in the highest!

I leave to each the care of answering for himself. But permit me to address a few other questions to my audience. In what do those rejoice, on such a day, to whom Jesus is not a king come in the name of the Lord, but a being of an uncertain nature, of an equivocal dignity, a mere teacher, making known a more perfect system of morality? Do they rejoice that the demands of the law are augmented, that new chains are added by Jesus to those with which they were bound, and that it is still more difficult to do the will of God, since he has revealed it in its perfection? Do they rejoice that the task is doubled while the means remain the same? Strange occasion for joy to a creature who, every day, is constrained to acknowledge, in things small as well as great, his incapacity and misery!

In what do those rejoice, on such a day, who, long accustomed to regard Christianity as a divine religion, remain satisfied with this general notion, preserving, without breaking the seal, the letter which includes such gracious news, and never availing themselves, either for instruction or consolation, of those important communications which it contains? Custom and propriety bring them to the house of God, to-day and always; but in what do they rejoice? That they belong to the external body of the Church of Christ? This is doubtless a great advantage when properly used. But what more has he who stops here than the man who rejects the Gospel? Is it the walls, said one of the fathers, is it the walls that make the church? Does it constitute one a Christian to live in the bosom of Christianity, and to be born in a certain latitude? One is not a Christian in virtue of external baptism, but in virtue of the baptism of regeneration. He is not a Christian because he is inscribed and enrolled in our common Christianity; for Jesus has not come into the world to found parishes, but a church.

In what, on such a day, do those rejoice, who, accepting the message of grace, believe themselves included in the divine amnesty, but who, after having cried with the disciples, *Peace in heaven*, do not add with them, *glory in the highest!* In other words, in what do they rejoice who adhere to the promises and not to the precepts, who accept the grace and not the law, who wish by all means to be saved, but care not to be regenerated? I will tell you what they rejoice in,—they rejoice to see the government of God degraded for their sakes; for if grace might abolish the law, where would be glory to God? Will you tell me that at least they will love God, through gratitude, and that God will be glorified by their love? No such thing, my brethren; for we do not truly love what we do not esteem; we cannot really love a God whom we do not revere. God could not be the object of our regard, from the moment he had sacrificed to the design of saving us the least *iota* of that holy law which Christ himself has come not to abolish but to fulfil, and which is to remain intact and inviolate to the end of time. If they rejoice, then their joy is false; and we might address to them the words of an apostle, "Your laughter shall be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow."

Yes, my brethren, the sentiments of a Christian are not entire except in the whole of these words, "Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord! peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!" Without these sentiments, this festival and all our festivals are but vain ceremonies. Ah! if our heart is a stranger to such sentiments, let us desert these sacred festivals,—let us approach these temples no more,—let us suppress these forms, void of meaning, so that our life may be profane, but consistent. Or rather let us aspire to be clothed with those dispositions with which worship is true worship, and festivals true festivals. Let us ask God to penetrate us with those sentiments which alone give repose to the soul and value to life. Let us receive Christ as the disciples received him, as the true God and eternal life. Sages of the earth, he is the key of your problems, the completion of that philosophy which you resume without ceasing, but never finish; troubled spirits, your peace; lovers of wealth, your true treasure; men, the word which solves the enigma of life, and conquers the power of death. He alone rebinds us to the author of our being

and to universal order. Without him, wandering through life, between a gloomy past, and an unknown future, by turns the sport of our passions and our reason, a prey to infinite desires which nothing can satisfy, reduced laboriously to construct poor imitations of happiness, tired of living and afraid to die; above all, afraid to be judged, we must approach, without guide or support, that frightful limit where the earth gives way under our feet. Let us go, then, to the Finisher of our salvation; let us rejoice in his advent; let us scatter at his feet tears and palms; these tears shall be wiped away by a divine hand; these palms shall become our crown in the city of peace, when, quenching our thirst at the fountain of all perfection and felicity, we shall repeat the acclamations of the ancient believers, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!"

XXIII.

THE BOX OF OINTMENT.

"And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the *burying*. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."—Mark, xiv, 3-9.

THE Gospel, my brethren, is very different from other histories. What they treasure up, it treats with neglect; and what they allow to fall into oblivion, it carefully preserves. How many great events cotemporaneous with Jesus Christ does the evangelical history pass over in silence! But it has preserved the remembrance of the mite which the poor widow cast into the treasury, and it was the will of Christ that to the end of time mention should be made within the church of the ointment which Mary poured on her Saviour's head.

The word of Christ has been fulfilled; his gospel has carried every where the memory of that woman, so that the house of that friend of Jesus, the house of God, which is the church, has been all filled with the odour of that ointment.

It is on her account, on account of this woman, it is in honour of her that this history has been preserved; but doubtless it is on our account too—for can we suppose that God has done honour to an act unworthy of honour? and if honourable in the eyes of God, can it be otherwise than fitted to edify? If so, it would be

the only history, the only feature in the Gospel without its use for the glory of God and for the good of souls.

Our first impulse, on reading it, is to condemn those whom we see to have been reproved by Jesus; and for this effect it was not requisite that the evangelist should have told us that Judas was the organ of their murmurs, and revealed the secret motive of that unworthy apostle. We condemn because Jesus Christ condemned, and nothing is more natural; but this does not lessen the probability that, if we had been in the place of the apostles, our first impulse would have been to speak as they did.

Do not we speak as they did on many occasions? Does our age, engrossed with utility and economy, practical as it loves to call itself, understand better than Judas that useless profusion and costly homage? I suspect it admires less the compassionate providence of the Friend of man in the history of the multiplication of the loaves, than his care in causing the fragments that remained to be gathered up. How can this broken box and poured out ointment, for no other purpose than momentary gratification, be pleasing in the eyes of those who cry in regard to our admirable cathedral, What a waste of money and labour! Several generations exhausted themselves in the effort to rear that pile without being able to finish it, and to what end? God dwells not in temples made with men's hands; a plainer edifice would have sufficed; shelter, decency, accommodation, are all that are requisite. A beautiful church is a fine thing, but the sense of beauty is not among the real wants of our nature; the cry of poverty is much more urgent; when this has ceased it will be time to rear cathedrals—till then let us build oratoires.

Now remark, if you please, that it is not precisely the sentiment of the disciples that our Lord rebukes, nor is his answer an express approbation of this woman's conduct. He does not express an opinion. He rather offers an excuse than approves. He asks their indulgence for Mary rather than their praise. He honours merely her intention. The question as to the form which her homage took is reserved. He merely desires them not to trouble her, because, said that gentle and charitable Master, "She hath wrought a good work upon me."

Was this act the best possible in respect of its matter and its

form? Was it at the given time and in the given circumstances that which it was best to do? Our Lord does not say it was. One thing only he says—"She hath wrought a good work on me." Let us weigh all the terms of this declaration, and first the concluding words. This action was good towards Jesus Christ. He says no more. He does not say that the action was good in itself, but that it was good in regard to him. What does this expression mean, my brethren? Have we here the standard of Jesus Christ? Is it by this that he determines the goodness of an action? Is it enough to him that it is good in reference to himself? My brethren, if this were his meaning, he would have spoken absolutely, and without mentioning himself, "This woman hath wrought a good work." And it is precisely because he adds "in regard to me," that we have no right to interpret these words in the sense that an act is good in his eyes simply because he is the object of it. If to judge an action to be good it were not enough for the man Jesus Christ that it was good in regard to himself, is that not enough for us, my brethren? Shall we not say distinctly that which Jesus Christ has not said, and shall we not declare that act which had Jesus Christ for its object to have been good for that very cause? What was that act? An homage to Jesus Christ. Shall we censure an act of homage rendered to him who is worthy of all homage? But that would be to refuse him our own. Shall we say that that homage was not well-timed? that the form of it was not judicious? That is possible, and thus that woman might not have deserved unqualified praise. But she at least deserved that we should not trouble her, for if there were anything reprehensible in the form of her homage, there was nothing to be said as to its object, which was Jesus Christ. In place, then, of hastily judging what she did, and of asking what she might have done, let us first consider what she designed to do, let us look to whom she desired to honour, by the love of whom it is she was misled, and let us ask ourselves if an action which is good in regard to Jesus Christ is not, taken altogether, a good action.

And that is not all; the act once taken in this sense, that is, as an homage to the Saviour—recommends itself to us by the sentiments which appear to have inspired it. That homage is agreeable

to Jesus Christ, not only because it is addressed to him, but because it is worthy of him. That homage, whatever may be said as to its form, expresses all that a Christian soul must feel for Jesus Christ. What ought we, in truth, to say to that God-man, and what ought we to find in our heart when we render him homage. What? Admiration? respect? an estimation of him above all sages, all heroes, all men? No! but that as he has given himself for us, we, in our turn, give ourselves to him; that we exist for him; that every thing we have is held not for ourselves, but for him; that no sacrifice on our part appears to bear any proportion to that which he has made for us; and that we are ready to abandon everything for his service and for his glory. Now what is the language of the act of Mary, but all this at once? See her search amongst her whole possessions for the most precious and the most valued thing, that she may consume it in honour of Jesus Christ—for it is truly a loss or waste which she intended to make,—and the objection of the disciples, To what purpose is this *waste?* expresses the true meaning of the act better than they imagined. It was not enough to employ this perfume if she did not expend it wholly. And since it is to lose or waste it to pour it all out at once over the head of Jesus Christ, she resolves to waste it. She is better pleased to waste it by consecrating it directly to the honour of Jesus Christ than to employ it more usefully, perhaps, in another way. Ah! this perfume was doubtless the most precious thing she could find in her stores! Doubtless if she had possessed a single thing more precious, she would have preferred to sacrifice it, since, not content with having in a moment bestowed so valued an object, she broke (needless sacrifice) the alabaster vase in which the ointment was contained. It was then that Judas might cry out with displeasure "To what purpose is this waste?" since the perfume spread around might minister gratification, but not the broken box. But in this the character of the first of these acts is misapprehended. Mary had in view in pouring out like water this perfumed ointment, not to afford pleasure, but to subject herself to a loss. She wished at once to express and to prove her feeling that nothing was so dear to her as her Saviour, that she was prepared for all sacrifices for his sake, and that, not having it in her power to make all sacrifices at once,

she made that the opportunity of which presented itself, that which was at once a sacrifice and an act of homage. She united in one act the reality and the symbol—she gave and she adored. It was with this view she poured out the ointment, it was with this view she broke the box. And has she no other sacrifice to make for the sake of him who for her gave up every thing, sacrificed every thing? Cannot she devote herself? She did so, my brethren, she did this at the moment when the perfumed ointment flowed in streams over the blessed forehead of her Master. She brake another vase whence issued odours still more sweet. She brake her own penitent heart; and grief, love, and hope, perfumes more exquisite than spikenard, myrrh, and incense, spread themselves around and filled the house. You perceived nothing of this, O intolerant disciples! in vain is this perfume spread round you; but your Master has breathed it; he has understood an action incomprehensible by your proud hearts; he has seen the sorrow of heart of that poor Mary; he has discerned the tears of her repentance which, perhaps, could not get outward vent, roll drop by drop from her heart; he knows the secret of that mute grief;—the Saviour and the sinner understand each other, and there passes between them, silently, something sublime, something ineffable, which you will not be able to comprehend unless you yourselves come, transported with sorrow and love, to pour perfumes also on the head of Jesus, to shed tears at his feet, and to break your hearts before him.

Say not then to Mary, "To what purpose is this waste?" for, if her grieved and tender spirit could listen to you, she would reply, "The grief which overtops my other sorrows is that I can sacrifice no more. Oh! how little worth are some perfumed, and that alabaster box! How little worth does the whole creation seem to me! How could I, in my ecstacy, trample under foot before my Saviour every thing which the world values most, every thing which is most grateful to the senses, all the pomp and the delights of kings! But I shall do what I can that my Saviour may know that I love him; all the sacrifices that I can make for him deserve not the name, they are but images, may they at least faithfully show what is in my heart!" This sentiment, my brethren, appears throughout the whole of Mary's conduct. She does not content herself with the broken vase and the poured out ointment, she

takes upon herself, with eager affection, the most humble offices, one office which, in a strange house, did not belong to her—that of washing Jesus's feet; and she employs for this purpose, not water, but the same precious perfumes; she dries them not with a towel, but with her hair; in short, she exhausts every evidence of humility and adoration, and testifies without words, as if all words had been too weak for what she felt, that He whom she honours in so many different methods, is not a mere man, not even the highest of men, but her Saviour and her God.

If the disciples did not see in the soul of Mary all that their Master discovered there, what they did not see they might have conceived. They might have conceived her love, her grief, her gratitude; they might have imagined that that chastened soul, meeting, after long waiting, the Prince of her salvation, could not restrain the first emotions of her heart, nor deliberate long as to the best form of the homage she owed to Jesus Christ: what would they have done if they had known, and, above all, if they had shared all the feelings which struggled in the soul of Mary? They did not suspect that the very day Jesus ate with them at the table of Simon was the last of his ministry, if indeed we can separate his ministry from his passion, and if his passion is not the most important and solemn portion of his ministry. They did not yet foresee that this journey of their Master from Bethany to Bethphage, from Bethphage to Jerusalem, was the road to his death, and that they were accompanying him, by short stages, to the place of his execution. What do I say? Were they willing to believe it when he spoke to them of his approaching death, of the grain that must die before it spring and bring forth fruit, of that *lifting up*, of that mysterious throne whence he was to draw all men unto him? "God forbid," cried they, "God forbid; this shall not be to thee." Had that poor woman believed with more simplicity? Had she better understood? Had she obtained a deeper insight into the mystery of the cross revealed in vain to the immediate disciples of the Saviour? Hear what Jesus Christ says, in the Gospel according to John, "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this." Against the day of my burying? And already she employs the perfume; she pours it out, without keeping back a drop, upon the head and feet of Jesus. Has that

day come then? Has this woman already buried Jesus! Yes, my brethren, this day is already, in the reckoning of Mary's faith, the day of his burying. Her grief anticipates the hour of mourning. She sees already the sacrifice offered; the victim lies before her; she sees it already pierced, bloody, and dead; she pays to that Jesus, alive, and speaking to her, the funeral honours which she had reserved for his dead body. So lively is her faith, so much has her grief outrun time, so deeply has she entered into the thought and meaning of Jesus Christ. Think you, my dear brethren, that Jesus Christ did not take this well, and that her act, in other respects good, did not become more so by all that was added to it by a faith so simple, docile, and pious?

Ah! we can no more say with Judas, "To what purpose is this waste"? There is no waste. The example of the faith and love of Mary—the edification exhaled from it through all ages, as from an inexhaustible perfume, has a thousand and a thousand times compensated for that poured out ointment and broken vase. But even although the faith of that woman had not enabled her to see the death of Jesus Christ so near, so cruel, or even so inevitable, still He, in whom she saw the Saviour of the world and the Son of God, could not remain for ever on the earth; one day he would cease to enlighten with his presence the darkness of our exile; one day his words, full of grace and truth, would cease to be heard; we would have the poor with us always, but we would not have him always. It was true, moreover, that, less favoured than the apostles, Mary could not, like them, accompany Jesus Christ, and satisfy herself with beholding him and hearing his discourse. Had she seen him often, waited for him long? We know not. But of how small account were these blessed meetings compared with the value of his constant society! how rare in comparison with the wants she experienced! with what transport did she see him approach! with what eagerness did she set herself at his feet and place herself, so as not to lose one of his divine words! And if, then, forgetting for a moment the poor who represented him to her in his absence, she allowed herself to lavish on this divine friend her time and her substance; if she hastened, so to speak, to serve and honour in his person him whom afterwards we shall see her honour and serve in the person of the poor, who would not

have regard to her peculiar circumstances, who would have the courage to blame her but those cold hearts to whom every thing which exceeds the ordinary measure appears pure extravagance, and who recommend above every thing moderation to others, because they find in themselves nothing which requires to be moderated or restrained?

Be comforted, Mary. That God who out of love became man pardons and permits some scope to this affection. Be reassured, also, ye poor people who, at the news of the approach of this meek King, shall press around him, and form a triumphal procession to the parricidal city. Jesus has spoken; ye may, unopposed by him, follow the impulse of your heart; you may spread your garments under the feet of his humble mule, and tear down the palm-trees of the plain to make for Jesus a green path on the dusty road. Fear not the cry of Judas, "To what purpose is this waste?" Her Master is pleased with her act, and his indulgence is promised to your songs and your palms. It will not be said that when, in the judgment of the world, every passion carries with it its excuse, no excess will be forgiven to the most just, the most holy of affections.

Need we insist, brethren, upon the lessons which this history inculcates? It seems to us that they arise out of it spontaneously in proportion to the earnestness of our study. It is not even necessary to have studied it, to have read it is enough, to find there one of the most important lessons—that of looking to the intention or the heart in the actions of our fellow-men.

An action is precisely of the value of the motive by which it has been actuated. This is a truth which cannot be questioned without overthrowing all morality, and even the very principle of morality itself. While it is unquestioned, however, it is universally forgotten. What do I say? Alas! it is too often remembered when the object is to depreciate the merit of a good action; then this rule is applied unjustly but with all care: malice, which beholds a man's reputation flourish upon his actions as on a stately trunk, glides like a worm to the roots of this fair tree, that by gnawing these it may cause its beauty to wither. But is an action bad, or is it only defective judged of by itself? We who so well know that any work good in appearance may be

bad when traced to its principle, have not been at equal pains to keep in mind that in the same way the principle of an act may be better than that act itself. Perhaps it is, as sometimes we have heard sententiously said, that a bad principle is to be presumed rather than a good one. Deplorable and inhuman maxim! But though ten times to one that maxim may be true, it is necessary ten times to one to try to find it false, and only to believe in the bad motive on the surest proofs, and in the last extremity. Why at least be not eager to seek out any good that may be found along with the evil? why not seek the one at least as anxiously as the other? Why, above all, like the unhappy disciple of our Lord, look chiefly, look exclusively at the faulty sides of an action, at the error which may be mingled with a good intention, instead of looking first to the good intention, which is as apparent, and which it is much more important to bring forward? Do you say that, after having found good intentions so rare, you are surprised to find that they are common, and if common, that it is of no importance to give them prominence? O cruel inconsistency! Let not us be guilty of it my brethren; when we cannot approve absolutely another's act, let us not approve of it. That is just. But let us beware of distressing him who has performed it. Let us, on the contrary, show him that we appreciate his good design, and that it is chiefly to it we look. Let us thank him that in a world where, in our view, the wish to do what is right is so rare,—let us thank him and congratulate him for having at least intended well. Let us not by the rigour of a proud and inflexible rule crush that delicate flower of conscientiousness which has begun to spring in his bosom. Let us not be so stern in our wisdom as to be without consideration; so full of reason as to forget mercy. Let us tenderly rear, and be on our guard against injuring a plant which it gives us joy to see spring up. Let us honour good intention without flattery or exaggeration. If hell is, as they say, paved with good intentions, it is not with intentions like those of Mary. Heaven, on the contrary, is all adorned and radiant with them, and, in doing them honour, we honour God who blesses them, and his spirit who inspires them.

Moreover, it is needful in the judgment we form, to take account of the difference of positions, and the difference of mental

tendencies. The disciples failed in the first of these rules when they censured an effusion of tenderness and joy in a woman who had not like them the privilege of accompanying Jesus every where, and who enjoyed his divine presence only at distant intervals; and they failed in the second, when they wished to confine the tender and perhaps enthusiastic heart of a woman within the limits which circumscribed their own respect and their own zeal. Some allowance must, my brethren, be made for certain natures, and for certain moments in the life of every one. All the faculties which God has given us must seek their gratification. It would be as unjust to prohibit enthusiasm as it would be foolish to enjoin it. We must not limit the pious soul to one given mode of honouring that which it loves. There is at bottom in all souls an irresistible tendency not only to regulate itself, but to expand itself; a tendency which at certain times forces us, so to speak, out of ourselves, and excites us to unite ourselves to the object of our homage more immediately, more sensibly, than by simple obedience.

This is not obedience, this is not duty; there is nothing there which may be formally required of you; but the impulse which carries the soul above its habitual impressions, and gives it a feeling, and as it were a taste of the divinity, that impulse tempers it, fortifies it, and renders obedience more sweet to it, and duty more dear. I admit that every thing which appears to us beautiful is not good; but God so ordered it that every thing good was beautiful, and these two things had originally but one name. Beauty is a part, a form of truth. If any doubt this, let him read the Scriptures, where truth and beauty are so closely allied that they cannot be distinguished, and where the most magnificent language seems the only mode of expressing truths the most sublime. Let the Scriptures be read before enthusiasm is condemned, for they are full of it—they overflow with it—and we see there the heart of the prophets "gushing out good matter." The whole Bible is a box of ointments, the immortal emanations of which rise from age to age to the throne of the Lamb. The whole Bible is a sublime concert, whose harmonies, constructed by God himself, are as if a prelude, by turns joyful and melancholy, humble and triumphant, to the eternal concert of the heavens. Ah! if the spirit form now in pious

souls breathings which resemble songs, let them rise to heaven in all their harmony. You have left Mary to break the box of ointment: how many others have, like her, a box to break, and perfumes to pour out. Let religion, which is a virtue, be also a hymn when God will have it to be so. Give the future that character which you admire in the past. Christianity in ancient times was not content with flowing in the life of man as a river within its bed; it flowed over from his heart and his genius, and the earth was covered with wonders; and the world had no more to lament in the magnificences of truth, the elegance of the fables of antiquity; under all forms it saw wonders unfolded of which the natural man had never had any idea. Religion will produce them again: it will always produce them, for neither truth nor the soul of man has become exhausted.

But I hasten, my brethren, to the last and an important lesson. Good intention, which is no other thing than love, may deceive itself without doubt, but it does not always deceive itself. In the divine flame which the Holy Spirit kindles the light is inseparable from the heat, and we are in every sense obliged to confess that he who seeks to do the will of God, will know not only the fundamental truth proclaimed in the Gospel, but all the truths which give it form and application in life. Even in loving we may deceive ourselves regarding many things, we may deceive ourselves long; but, nevertheless, love is light, love longs after the light. To love Jesus Christ, and to confine ourselves always to pouring perfumes on his head or on his altars; to neglect the works which he has given to be done, or to do them in another spirit than his; to forget the poor, whom he has commended to us, and who represent him; no, my brethren, that is not possible, and it is very necessary to call in question the purity of the motive where there are not effects corresponding to it. The advance of humanity, and that of each individual towards the truth, is slow and laborious but sure. This justice, at least, ought to be rendered to Christianity, that its sincere disciples thirst after truth, are scrupulous regarding the truth, and when they possess it, follow it in proportion as they are Christians. There are errors which are impossible. Mary, when her Master was no longer with her, doubtless could not forget that the poor were with her, and that He,

himself, was still with her in the person of the poor. Far from being made to forget the poor by her love to her Saviour, the more she loved him, the more she loved them. She saw him henceforth in each of them. They were dear to her and sacred, both as objects of the same divine compassion, and as living images of the Master whom she deplored. She found in each of the poor Him who had not where to lay his head; in each outcast, Him whom his own did not receive; in each subject of oppression, the Just One whom the hatred of the world had put to death. In fine, she could not look upon a miserable sinner without being reminded of Him who was made sin for us that we might be made righteous. Every subject of misfortune was, in her eyes, a likeness of Jesus humbled, condemned, and suffering. And has not what we say of Mary been true of all true Christians? Jesus Christ, in addressing to them that memorable saying, "The poor always ye have with you," has bequeathed to them for ever those from whom there cannot be taken away the singular glory of being in a peculiar manner, at least externally, like Jesus Christ. Has that inheritance been repudiated? Has not the heart of true Christians been, in all times, and in all countries, the sure refuge of the unfortunate?

We may go further. It is certainly to serve Jesus Christ to honour him in the person of the poor; but still we must beware of deceiving ourselves as to the good we do them. Here assuredly alms are not enough. The giving of relief to the poor is a complicated affair, a difficult act, certain elements of which may be better possessed by an enlightened man devoid of compassion, than by a man simply charitable. But what can be inferred to the disadvantage of charity from its calling to its aid science, experience, and genius? Is charity in itself science, experience, genius? Is it not enough for it to be almsgiving; and when, in its ardent desire to do good, it surrounds itself with all its natural auxiliaries, does it not do all that it ought to do? Is not this to do much? But assuredly true charity does more. It does not open the heart without expanding the mind. The interest which it awakens in the soul is the principle of sustained attention, and of precious discoveries. Occupied at once with physical and moral necessities, it combines them always in its ideas, and never supplies the one to the preju-

dice or neglect of the other. It has its industry, its own genius, by which it often astonishes and surpasses the most skilful. It has, perhaps, itself alone been more fruitful in invention than science or genius. Like all deep affections, it renders knowledge fruitful; it does not teach every thing, but how many things are there which, without it, we should never learn?

But however that may be, my brethren, love is the true good, the only absolute good, the only eternal good; so that if, even out of charity, we ought to desire that the art of doing good may unceasingly grow into perfection, we ought especially to desire that love may become perfect, may grow stronger, and more universal. Should all the ameliorations which we are constantly witnessing in the art of lessening the sufferings of the poor, and suffering generally, reach a stage of perfection without love, we should feel bound to thank on account of it God, whose compassion towards the human race is endless, and who never ceases to pour balm into its self-inflicted wounds. But that for which we should offer him more ardent thanksgiving—that which we will seek above all, is the multiplication on the earth, and in the heart of each man, of that principle of life and happiness, that truth, that charm of human existence, charity. For of what avail, in fact, would be the soothing, or even the abolition of all sorrows, if the greatest of them all took their place, if the human heart, in the midst of all its riches, remain destitute, and ever growing more so, of love? Ah! understand the Providence of God. It appears to you to have created charity for the sake of the poor, it has more truly created poverty for the sake of charity. Does it not depend on Providence that there should be no more poor? It has not designed this; it has not promised it. It has promised, on the contrary, that we should have the poor always with us; it has promised this to the rich, it has promised it to the poor; for there is not a poor man who may not find in his journey some other poor man to aid, and if he is not a poor man in the ordinary sense of the word, he will be a poor man in some other sense; he will be in some degree unhappy in body or in spirit, to whom the most indigent man, if a Christian, will find something to give. In that sense it may well be said, and it is consolatory, that the poorest among men is rich enough to "lend unto the Lord."

There are the poor and the unhappy, not only because sin has made us poor and unhappy, but also (for God has drawn good out of every evil), that charity may have opportunities, and that it may not grow dormant for want of exercise. Let us rejoice then in charity becoming more and more wise and industrious—it is our duty. Let us rejoice in Mary selling her ointment of spikenard for three hundred pence. But, above all, let us rejoice in the feeling which, in its turn, lays it at the feet of Jesus Christ, and at the feet of the poor. Let us rejoice in her devoted affection. Let us seek that the principle of Christian charity, to which so many benevolent institutions owe their origin, may strengthen itself in the church and in the world from day to day, that we may not be condemned to see or to foresee a day when, the breath of life leaving those sagacious systems of philanthropy, there shall survive but the mere forms of all that ancient charity. Let us pray that true affection—love ascending to God—may inspire more and more the labours which we admire; and, to this end, let us pray also that Jesus Christ may be known—that his love may be felt—that his whole work may be understood and accepted, for herein is the renewal of hearts, and the renovation of the world.

XXIV.

THE SAMARITAN.

"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus, answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him. And went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise."—Luke, x, 29-37.

"AND who is my neighbour?" At this day there is no one to whom this question would not appear at least strange, and if any one were seriously to repeat it he would be disgraced in the eyes of all men. And yet, at the time of its being uttered by this man, far from disgracing him, it was possible for it to do him honour. We see that in putting it he hoped to appear just, that is, a scrupulous observer of the law. In asking, Who is my neighbour? he seemed to say, 'I wish to forget or neglect nobody; I desire to love as my neighbour every man to whom that title belongs. It is clear enough that I cannot bestow this affection on every one; but I should be grieved indeed to be found refusing it to any one on whom it is my duty to bestow it. Tell me then fully who my neighbour is, and I shall eagerly salute him and treat him as such.'

That the same act, my brethren, should have brought honour to a man then, and should cover him with shame now, shows, more clearly than any thing else, the difference of the times; and

that man's question and our Lord's reply mark an epoch in the history of humanity. But, if it is interesting to enquire why that which seemed reasonable eighteen hundred years ago seems absurd now, it is still more natural to enquire how that question could appear reasonable even at that time, and if the human race had always hitherto agreed in feeling with this doctor. To give ourselves to this double enquiry would be, my brethren, to study the history of one idea, I mean the history of the idea attached to the term "neighbour" among men. It would be to study the history of mankind under one particular but important aspect. We cannot trace that history here, except hastily and in its bolder outlines, but this is enough for our purpose, which is to set before you one of the great effects of the coming of Jesus Christ and of his divine instructions.

In the first ages of the world, and around the cradle of humanity, no one thought of asking "Who is my neighbour?" God had made of one blood all the human race; he had given them the same ancestors. Descended from a single pair, all mankind were literally one family; general human brotherhood sprung from a brotherhood still more strict. The sentiment to which we give the name of *humanity* had for its origin the domestic affections: man learned to love man in a son, in a father, in a brother, in a relative; at first a neighbour was a next of kin; and such was the longevity of the first man that he could see his family become a people, and that the individuals of that people, looking still on their one great ancestor, were compelled to recognize in one another, not fellow-citizens only, but, relatives and brethren. This bond of a common origin was long appreciable and long felt. Tradition preserved the idea of it after the direct proofs of it had disappeared. And the old habit of seeing in all men relatives, became, notwithstanding many causes of isolation and division, a sentiment to which there was afterwards given the name of humanity.

You will see, my brethren, the design of God in this. When God said to the immortal creatures whom he had just created in his image, "Increase and multiply," his object was not merely to multiply his image upon the earth, nor did he design merely to increase the sum of enjoyment there. He meant to create one vast family, all the members of which should feel themselves bound to

one another even as to their Head. All of them, called to glorify, by the development of their faculties, that holy and good God who had bestowed those faculties, were to aid one another in this sublime employment. One and the same aim, one and the same love were to unite man to man, family to family, nation to nation; and the diversity of character and talent among individuals, of constitution among races, and of position and resources among nations were established only with the view of rendering men necessary one to another, and of keeping constantly alive in them the feeling of that necessity. All differences, all oppositions even were to be confounded and lost in the idea of God, and the entire human race to form before him one man only,—its thousand thousand voices but one voice, or at least one harmonious concert, an unceasing hymn of gratitude and adoration.[1]

It is in the simple relation of man to man that the divine sentiment of charity appears and is displayed. I speak of a love different from all other affections so called in that the senses, interest, habit, prejudice, the ties of blood having nothing to do with it, leave it a purity which does not exist in the same degree in any other affection. Without that love for man as man, all the private affections of family, country, or sympathy do not elevate us above the animals, and none of these private affections deserve the sacred

[1] In another sense still the human race may be considered as one man only. While each animal begins anew the work of its species, each human being does not begin anew the work of mankind. He continues it, and cannot but continue it. He receives, on his entrance into life, the heritage of all ages—he is the son of the whole human race. Thousands of causes, thousands of persons have co-operated since the beginning of time to make him what he is. Man, isolated either in time or space, is not truly man. Absolute solitude transforms him into an animal, and much less than an animal, since he wants its infallible instincts, or has only, in their stead, a powerless reason, indolent and, as it were, shrouded. A man, then, does not come up to his type, does not perfectly exist without his race; it is the race that makes him a man. And when we picture to ourselves a man existing by himself as man and with all the attributes of his race, we dream, since a man purely individual and isolated is an impossibility. It is not thus in any other department of the animal kingdom. A whole does not exist anywhere else as in our race. But is it not wonderful that true individuality exists only in the same race also, and that the sole being whose nature is developed fully only as one of a race is also the only one who manifests the sentiment of liberty, morality, and the consciousness implied in the word *me?*

name of love till, perfected by the Spirit of God, it has become *charity*.

It is not our design, you may believe, to condemn or depreciate those private affections which nature inspires, and which ought to be, according to the design of God, a training to love more extended and more exalted: God, who could have formed each individual in his turn of the dust of the ground, and perpetuated the human race by a multitude of successive creations, has chosen to surround men with families, and to found, by means of natural wants and by the interchange of benefits, as well as by the mystery of paternity, the domestic circle. It is by these affections, so natural, so just, of son, wife, father, citizen, that our faculty of loving is exercised and quickened. And it is worthy of the wisdom and goodness of God to have placed on every hand of us, and already around our cradle, continual occasions of loving, and urgent motives to love. What is said by the apostle John, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" fully authorizes us to say in our turn, he that loveth not those of his brethren whom he sees or knows, how can he love those of his brethren whom he has not seen or known? If he loves not those to whom Providence hath united him by private relations, how should he love those to whom he has no tie but that of the most general kind? The human conscience is at no loss to decide on such a point. No one will believe that a man who is indifferent to the happiness of those nearest to him can feel a sincere interest in his fellow-men generally. No one gives credit for sincerity to that eccentric philanthropy which passes over the parent to give itself to country, and passes over country to attach itself to humanity, passes over the living to lavish itself on those who are gone. The Gospel, far from despising the private affections, recommends them. The holiest men of the ancient and of the new dispensation cultivated them, and Jesus Christ himself, in his manhood, showed us in his own person a perfect model of the son, the friend, and the citizen.

And yet, my brethren, the faculty of loving every man only because he is a man, is itself more exalted and more excellent than all our private affections. In proportion as love is less aided by circumstances,—in proportion as private motives which may at-

tach us to a man, interest, habit, prejudice, tie of blood disappear, —in proportion, in a word, as we love without a reason, or rather for the sole reason of the divine stamp impressed upon a man's forehead, or the need which he shows of our love, that love, the better disengaging itself from every impure or simply foreign admixture, becomes more worthy of its name. The more we love in this way, the more we love as God loves, whose pure charity has no reason but in itself, and supplies every thing required for its exercise without the aid of any private or personal relation. The more our love is spiritual, like the love of God who is a Spirit, the more as a consequence it draws us to God and unites us to God. To sum up the whole, my brethren, we have our private affections more or less in common with the races inferior to our nature, this general love we have in common with God. Animals are certainly not without affections, they are acquainted with many of them, but there is nothing in them which approaches in the least degree that which in man we call humanity. That love is truly love. To all our other affections it must be added. Each of us must learn to love with that love his child, his wife, his relative, his friend; otherwise the sentiment which we cherish towards these be it as lively as it may, will be, under the beautiful term love, nothing but a taste, a habit, a passion, a concealed egotism.

It is out of that love, my brethren, that God would make one of the most glorious attributes of human nature and one of the means by which it may with one accord join in the great work which he has set before it of glorifying God upon the earth. You have seen, my brethren, what the allwise God has done to root and fix this sentiment in the human soul. And certainly, when we think of it, there does not seem to be any affection or institution protected in such various ways. By how many marks may a man discover a *neighbour* in his fellow-man! Not only is there the same formation of body and countenance, but the same necessities, the same dependence, the same dangers, the same enemies. In all alike there are reflection, language, conscience, the same sense of justice and feeling of truth; in all there are the belief and the felt need of a God; in all the feeling that there is a higher life than that of sense and a higher happiness than that of the world; in all there are the idea of immortality and a longing after the infinite;

in all there is, in fine, since the curse was pronounced upon the earth, a feeling that the same misfortune is resting upon all and is deserved by all.—But alas! in specifying one of the motives which ought to unite mankind, I have touched on the principal cause of their fatal disunion. When men ceased to respect God, how could they respect, on the forehead of a fellow-creature, the image of God? When a man had come to prefer his own will to God's, what other being in the universe could henceforth be sacred in his eyes? How, in a word, could the love of neighbour survive, in the heart of fallen man, the love of God? He confined his heart to affections which have such a relation to self-love that they seem a portion of it, and which are so independent of the will that they are undistinguishable from instincts. He loved as animals do, he no longer loved like God. If the name of man still inspired respect, if the sight of human suffering could still soften his heart, it is nevertheless true that, when the divine stamp had been obliterated, man was no longer, in the sense willed by God, the *neighbour* of man; the word even had lost its meaning; men had equals but no longer neighbours; the feeling of *community* and of the grand oneness of the human race became effaced. A man might still take an interest, at a time and in particular circumstances, in such or such an individual of the species; but earnest desire for the happiness of all, for the perfection of all, for the universal concurrence of the great human family in the designs of its divine Father and in promoting his glory ceased to keep possession of the soul. The difference of individuals from each other was more dwelt on than their general resemblance; external manners, opinions, language, degrees of intellectual culture, inequalities of rank and fortune,—all these superficial accidents hid from view the fundamental resemblance. In these accidents were sought those claims to brotherhood which ought to have been sought for deeper. The neighbour, henceforth, consisted of the parent, the friend, the ally, and, for certain purposes, the citizen. Particular groups seemed closely linked, but less as societies than as leagues. Men associated less out of mutual love than out of common hatred. Families strengthened themselves against families, classes against classes, nations against nations.

It is, my brethren, chiefly in the relation of nations to each

other that we see how completely the idea of *neighbour*, so carefully impressed by the hand of God upon man's heart, has lost by degrees its grandeur and beauty. Jealousy, distrust, and hatred seem to have become natural characteristics of the relation of one people to another, and these hostile feelings are strongest betwixt those in the closest proximity. Doubtless ignorance contributed to this. It was imagined that the prosperity of one country could only arise from the decline of another, just as the absurd notion was entertained that in commerce the gain of the one party in a transaction must be the loss of the other. It was an idea which reflected upon the Providence of God, which could not arise except in the decline of the primitive faith, and which has its origin in sin. The progress of enlightenment has already begun to dispel those prejudices and to draw together the nations. But ignorance was not the sole cause of the evil, nor will it be totally eradicated by knowledge. And, just as ignorance would not have sufficed to isolate nations, if, in the feeling of their common relation to God as their Father, they had found that of their common brotherhood, so knowledge will not, in drawing men together by motives of interest, render them truly and in heart neighbours of one another. Interest and common sense could not have sufficed to create a sort of universal brotherhood liable to be weakened and destroyed by external causes, if the internal and divine principle on which it was founded had not been first destroyed in the heart of man.

However that be, my brethren, before the advent of Him who was "to reconcile all things whether they be things on earth or things in heaven," and to whom, according to ancient prophecy, "the gathering of the people should be," the world was divided into hostile tribes of which each believed that the weakness of the rest was essential to its prosperity; the name of *stranger* had become, in all countries, a term of injury and reproach, and even amongst the people of God, worldly men, that is to say the great majority, had carried to so great a length this spirit of fierce nationality, that other nations, by common consent, designated the Jews as enemies of mankind, a title which Paul, born of the same ancestry, confirms with indignation and grief.—It is true that God himself, with views easily comprehended by us, raised a barrier

betwixt that people and all others; but it was from idolatry not from humanity that he designed to shut up the Hebrews. And this idea, altogether holy, became corrupted in their minds: They showed how possible it was to love idols while hating idolaters. Their pride increased with their infidelity. In proportion as they became like the rest of mankind they despised them, and defection and intolerance increased among them in the same degree; so that at the time of Jesus Christ's appearing among them they were, probably, of all the nations in the world, that nation to which the great lesson of our text had become most indispensable. Nowhere else, perhaps, than among the Jews; at no other time, perhaps, even among them, dared a man ask so openly, and with the secret hope of displaying his righteousness, "who is my neighbour?" And yet he who now addressed to Jesus Christ this question was a doctor of the law—a doctor of the law of God.

Jesus Christ did not neglect so favourable an opportunity of proclaiming the truth on this important point. And the way in which he improved it is very remarkable. He might have replied by giving a formal definition—but he related a story. He selected as the personages of that story not, generally, two men of two different nations, but specially a Jew and a Samaritan; a Jew, because he was addressing Jews; a Samaritan, because betwixt the Jews and Samaritans there was something worse than difference of origin, I mean such division as to opinions and worship as community of origin served only to strengthen and embitter. Those whom he brought together were not only strangers therefore, but rivals and enemies. And this was not all. In relating the circumstances of this transient intercourse betwixt a Jew and a Samaritan he might have made the Jew the benefactor of the Samaritan; but he made the Samaritan the benefactor of the Jew, that the Jew might have no choice as to his relation to the Samaritan but might be bound by the benefits he received from this stranger, and enemy, and might have no alternative but that of recognizing this stranger as his neighbour or of avowing the most odious ingratitude. In fine, not content with this arrangement of circumstances, which might, in truth, have been sufficient for his purpose, he brings into the field other personages who, although Jews, left a fellow-countryman to perish (if they recognized him as such,) and, though ministers of religion, neg-

lected to observe towards a fellow-man those offices of mercy which they, in their quality as priests, ought to have been the foremost to discharge. This Samaritan, on the contrary, whether he recognized or not a Jew in the wounded man, hastened to him simply as a man and a sufferer, and lavished upon him all those cares which on such an occasion one brother could expect from another. For our Lord is not satisfied with a rapid and concise narration. He places, in prominent relief, all the details, on to the last, of the Samaritan's conduct. He exhausts his subject, so that there is nothing omitted which the most fastidious in the matter of beneficence could require or imagine. Or rather, exceeding the imagination of such, he makes the conduct of the Samaritan a perfect masterpiece of beneficence. It is impossible to imagine a duty more completely and perfectly discharged.

It must be confessed, my brethren, that the Priest and Levite may have had a more particular reason than mere indifference for turning aside from the wounded traveller. The thieves from whose blows the man was suffering might not be far off, and might even have calculated on making new victims by means of the imprudent pity which the first had excited. Besides, this road, so noted for murders which for long had been committed there that it was called *the bloody way*, was not a road on which a man would tarry willingly, even if he had met nothing so forcibly to mark his danger. But a duty is not less a duty that it is difficult and dangerous. And it is only right to add that, the discharge of a duty being honourable in proportion as it is dangerous, the Samaritan who performed this duty merits that place in our regard which we should have bestowed on the two other passengers if it had been done by them. He is not content, moreover, with stopping as long as was necessary to set this man on his beast—a useless and perhaps hurtful aid in his wounded condition when his life was flowing out with his blood; the Samaritan, first of all, binds up the wounds of the unfortunate man, "pouring in wine and oil," with which happily he was provided. And may it not be allowed us to remark how unlikely a circumstance in the narrative this is, but at the same time how much beauty arises from its very unlikelihood, since it seems the better to display the care and attention which the Samaritan devoted to this work of mercy, as well

as his generous forgetfulness of danger? He now sets the wounded man upon his beast and brings him to the inn, and, not content with having placed him there and of committing him to others whose turn it might now seem to be to minister to the wounded man, he "takes care of him," said our Lord: he sees that the necessary attentions are afforded him; perhaps he prolongs his stay at the inn on this account. And this is not all; when he departed he gave not up all thought of him. He insured a continuance to him of the attentions his condition required, and promised to pay for them. Why did not others, the master of the inn for example, take now the part of the Samaritan? The cost which the care of this wounded man might cause was not so great as the danger which the meeting with him had brought the Samaritan into. Were others less closely connected with this wounded man than he? Was his claim upon them less than upon the Samaritan? And, finally, who knows but this man, though robbed, may have had resources or might be able to procure them, and thus himself defray the charges of his cure and maintenance? His benefactor enquires into nothing of all this. He is cautious not to disturb with them the object of his care. What he concerns himself with is that this man be attended to and cured. He takes this charge of an object claiming it at his hand and apparently in a state to require it; and, having undertaken this duty himself, devolves it upon no one. When, however, his presence is no longer necessary to the wounded man, he betakes himself to other duties; but, before setting out, he gives the host, either for services already rendered, or for those which the stranger might still require, a sum of money which he thinks sufficient. "Take care of him," says he to the host, "and whatever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." Has he told the wounded man who he is? Has he received, before setting out, the expression of his gratitude? The Divine Narrator does not inform us, and nothing leads us to suppose it.

Our Lord has enumerated all these traits, my brethren, only that we should group together under one idea—the fundamental idea of his story. The one man was in no way connected with the other, he was bound to him by no tie but that created, jointly by misfortune and compassion; and the one did for the other, in whom he

recognized neither a friend, relation, nor fellow-citizen, but simply a fellow-man, all that in such a case could be expected from the compassion of a fellow-citizen, relation, or brother, and what, alas! is not always to be obtained from such. It is thus that our Lord answered the question of the doctor, who, wishing to appear righteous, asked of him, "Who is my neighbour?" But have you noticed the form of the answer? The doctor had asked, Who is my neighbour? And Jesus Christ seemed to reply to him, Thy neighbour is he who shall have pity on thee; thou shalt call by this name him who shall wish thee or do thee good; for the neighbour of the man who fell among the thieves was the man who had mercy on him. Ah! my brethren, God forbid that we should give such an interpretation to the words of Jesus Christ! In saying that the wounded man must see a neighbour in his deliverer, in place of saying that the deliverer saw his neighbour in the wounded man, did not Jesus Christ seek to cover with shame those zealots of party who scrupulously enquire to whom, without compromising themselves, they may give the name of neighbour, whilst those very persons to whom they find it so difficult to offer any friendly recognition, themselves offer such recognition first; without thinking of country, family, or sect, men look on men simply as men, and are touched with compassion, and show their felt brotherhood by kindnesses and sacrifices? Jesus Christ seems to say, You hesitate, you delay, but, whilst you are hesitating and delaying, those before you, regarding whom you feel this embarrassment make the first advance towards you. Yielding to a feeling more just and more to be relied on than all your scruples, they come to you loaded with kindnesses. Are those who are capable of so loving you your neighbours, or are they not? and are you or are you not their neighbours? If they have come to you before they were called, cannot you also take one step towards those who have not called on you? If they are beforehand with you and with others, would you not wish to be beforehand with every one? Would you not wish to love all that is comprehended in the name of man? Shall not this name be sacred in your eyes? Shall it not appeal to your sympathy, and, in the hour of need command your compassion and devoted services? In a word, will not every man be your neighbour? Try, Jew, to disown the

Samaritan who treats you as a brother. If he be your neighbour, how can you be other than his?

O how beautiful a story, my brethren, has our divine Master related to us! I know only one more beautiful, it is that of which he was not the inventor, but the subject; and the story we have been reading, beautiful and touching though it be, is, compared with that of Jesus Christ, but a weak and inadequate resemblance. Jesus Christ himself could not invent another history as beautiful as his own. And is it not wonderful that the boldest imagination could not, in its loftiest flight, rise to the height of that reality?

Jesus Christ is himself the Samaritan on the road to Jericho. A man covered with wounds (this is you, it is I, it is every one of us) is lying on the road side. One passes by, but gives no aid, for it is a dangerous thing to halt on that road; it is *the bloody way*, and to stay to look even for a moment on that agonized sufferer may be fatal. Wise men have been slain, prophets have been slain. In all ages those have lost their lives whom a generous compassion has detained near the unfortunate whose blood stains a thousand spots. Even priests and Levites, men to whose office compassion belongs, have passed by a thousand times and looked the other way. In his turn comes Jesus Christ, not as by chance, but of set purpose, and on account of the wounded; he knew that on that spot was a dying man in need of his help. It is not wonderful that he has with him oil and wine, he knows that he will find one wounded; he comes for this end; the bloody way is peculiarly his way. He pours into the wounds of the traveller the oil and wine of his word; the oil which soothes, the wine which strengthens. He places the wounded man not upon his beast, for he has none, but he takes him upon his shoulders, or rather he lays him on his breast, and thus he carries the poor victim, bloody and weeping, across mountains and valleys, to an inn; he pays all, he becomes security for all; and he provides for the future, his spirit after his departure, is to watch over the man's recovery. But, my brethren, how much must we add to the parable to bring it up to the reality! We must conceive the Samaritan to have been a king or the heir of a throne; that, in the midst of his glory and his hopes, he listened to the cry of a sufferer which reached his ear from the dismal obscurity of that desolate road; that, in that mournful cry he distinctly recog-

nized the voice of a personal enemy; that, he foresaw death to be, not the probable, but the certain reward of his generous enterprise; that, having to accomplish the task alone, he went by night, unattended and unarmed, to the spot whence the cry proceeded; and, finally, to complete the measure of horror and of love, that he expected death, and received it, at the hand of the man whom he came to save. O our efforts are fruitless; no parable is adequate; words, the imagination fail under the weight of the reality. We must lay aside figure, we must relate the life and the death of the God-man descending from the heights of peace and glory to ally himself to human nature and embrace all its sufferings; receiving on his sinless head all the arrows of the wrath of God; coming to declare the truth not at the peril merely but at the cost of his life, rejected, maltreated, and at length crucified by those whom he loved. In a word, if we compare what he is in heaven, with what he was on earth, what he deserved at the hand of men with what he received, we shall have an example of devotedness and of love which no understanding can fathom, and no words describe.

Ah! my brethren, others had told before Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ himself had told better than them all, what a neighbour is, and what it is to love. But what were all these discourses, and what (may we ask) were even those of Jesus Christ himself, compared with the language of his life and death?—his life which already was a death, and his death which was that of the cross? Had not John good reason to say, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us"? (1 John, iii, 16.) No definitions, no reasonings here—a fact only—"Christ laid down his life for us." Would you know what charity is? "Christ laid down his life." Would you know what it is to be a neighbour? "Christ laid down his life for us," that is, for strangers and enemies. If you can prove that Jesus Christ was more closely related to men than men are to one another, and that Christ was more beholden to men than they are to one another, and that, in giving himself for men, he did something less extraordinary than a man would have done in giving himself for men; if you can prove that it was more natural for Christ to unite himself to our degraded human nature than it is for us to unite ourselves to our companions in wretchedness and exile,—we have nothing to say,

we add not a word. On your supposition, however, Jesus Christ did not descend from heaven to earth, did not represent here below the charity of the Godhead, did not bring peace to men, is not the Saviour of mankind; all this story of divine condescension and of an infinite sacrifice is but an invention or a dream. Well, be it so! But if you believe that Jesus Christ was, and that he did, what we have been reading in the Gospel, in a word, if you are Christians, then admit that the love which made him man to save men, and which was fixed on men as men, has stamped on their forehead an impression never to be effaced; admit that the being for whom God gave his own Son ought to be sacred in your eyes, —that you cannot refuse your love to that being without refusing your love to Him who loved him before you; and, that the proofs of your gratitude not being capable of ascending to heaven to Him who cannot receive ought at your hand, that gratitude ought, so to speak, to re-descend and spread itself around you, and overflow, if possible, upon all whom the Man of sorrows sought and loved, and blessed.

You cannot make distinctions which he did not make, and refuse to regard as your neighbour any of those of whom He was the neighbour. Whom then did he love? For whom did he pray? Over whom did he weep? For whom did his blood flow like sweat from his agonizing body? For whose sake did it fall, drop by drop, from his tortured limbs upon the cross? Have you ever pondered these things? Separated from the rest of mankind by land and sea, from past and future generations by years and by ages, still had He present to his thoughts the human race of all time and of every country. The whole human race was in his heart as one man, he loved every thing in the past which had borne the name of man, every thing in the future which was to bear that name. He had no need to see you distinctly, and to know you, in order to love you. His love for you existed before yourselves. At your birth he was watching over you ready to be your guardian. He was sympathizing beforehand in all your sorrows, he wept beforehand over your sins, was striving beforehand for the salvation of each of you. What need was there that he should know you, since it was not as individuals but as men that he loved you? Yes, it is man that the God-man loves. It is man, not of one

country or another, nor of the past or the future, nor the famous man rather than the obscure; it is man every where constituting but one body—one in the eyes of Jesus Christ, one in his origin, in the fall, in suffering, in glory. Do not we feel our hearts vibrate within us at such a thought? Do not we feel awaken, amidst our moral misery, the noble and touching instinct of our common humanity? Do not we recognize ourselves to be members of this vast body, affected at once by its sorrows and our own, responsible for our portion of the universal evil, obliged to embrace all the human race in our affection and in our prayers, and to bear, each according to his strength, the "noble burden of the human race" as a sacred orator of old expressed it? Yes, my brethren, I give your answer, without hearing it, this sentiment is no stranger to you; and, when we endeavour to point it out to you in Jesus Christ, we are sure of arousing it in you. But what is this but a confused and changeful feeling in comparison of the position and imperative obligation which the love of Jesus Christ has imposed upon each of you? Christians, cast your eyes upon the bloody way which your Master has just been treading. Follow him to that frightful side of the road where not one man, but mankind is a-dying. Witness to its close his work of mercy. Christians, the example of your Master casts into your arms thousands and thousands of wounded men lying, like the man in the parable, on the road to Jericho. He entrusts to each of you the entire human race: and each of you is called to love it. Every Christian is the common property of all men. He has not the same duties towards all, but he is bound to all. That man is not a Christian, he has not learned of Jesus Christ, if that sentiment is strange to him; what do I say?—if he is not habitually filled with it. He ought not to love merely, one by one, such members of the human race as circumstances may bring within his reach; he ought, like Jesus Christ, to love all mankind. This is the mark, the glory of true Christianity. Not certainly, that we would confound with love to mankind that senseless adoration of our own species, that grand league of human pride, which, making an imaginary individual out of the whole human race, and reducing the individual to nothing, assembles together, without uniting them, around a vast and vague idea, the builders of a second Babel, at the foot of

which the prodigy of a confusion of tongues is already repeated. No, that human race which Jesus Christ commends to our love is simply men. They were men whom he loved, they were men whom he came to save; and we know nothing of a pretended salvation of the human race of which men are not the immediate objects but only the instruments. No, social progress is but a secondary object of the great work of Jesus Christ; no, individuals have a value by themselves; they exist for themselves; they hold directly of God; they are not the mere agents and tools of a collective progress, which is itself but a sign or means of individual progress. No, it is not society which Jesus Christ came to redeem, it is not society which is to be taken to heaven, it is not society that is to carry the palms of the elect. But mankind does not the less on that account form a real body, organized for the purposes of God, and struggling in all its parts, though unconsciously, to fulfil them. For the sake of men, and for the glory of God, we must join intelligently in this aimless struggle. The human race suffers and groans, we must at least suffer and groan along with it; we must pray for it, we must take our share in the travail which agonizes it, for it is not in its thoughts to bring forth a new world to God, and to advance the time when every knee shall bow before Jesus Christ, and when every tongue, forced to prophesy, shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God his Father. But human nature labours for men, and in co-operating with it, it is for men you labour, for they are those whom Jesus Christ commends to you. If you have understood his love, if your heart is with him, if you have the same affections as he, if he has kindled within you that feeling of communion with men which, like that of communion with God, has been corrupted by sin, you will join in his work of redemption, you will carry it on in his name, you will, after his example, make haste to the road to Jericho, you will follow in his footsteps to the help of the wounded of every tribe, and language, and nation; asking no return for your love but the happiness of always loving more and more.

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